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SOME ACCOUNT OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

BY THOMAS INGOLDSBY, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS."

Do not
TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

48.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Banger House, Shoe Lane.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO

THOMAS HUGHES, Esq.

OF DONNINGTON PRIORY,

IN COMITATU BERKS.

MY DEAR NAMESAKE,

THE sins of Parents are often, for wise purposes, visited on their unoffending offspring.

Not unfrequently, too, Retribution, like the Gout—a form by the way which it sometimes assumes,—skips over a generation.

Now this is precisely *your* case.—But for a much respected relative of yours, once removed, my Cousin Nicholas had never shown his unblushing face to the sun.

To her then should the responsibility, *de jure*,

attach in the primary degree,—but the Age of Chivalry is not gone, let Mr. Burke—not the deaf gentleman—say what he will.

On your excellent “Governor” I dare not let it devolve;—were I so to commit myself he might, perhaps, in his magisterial capacity commit *me*, and I have not the slightest curiosity respecting the interior of Reading jail.—Besides he has literary sins enough of his own to answer for.

On your young and stalwart shoulders then it must perforce descend.—

That you may have the grace to bear this infliction with resignation, and never have the misfortune to incur a heavier one, is the sincere wish of

Your attached Friend,

THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

Tappington Everard,
March 15, 1841.

AVIS AU LECTEUR.

RESPECTED SIR — or MADAM — (N, or M, as the case may be,)

IN laying before you this little piece of family biography, it does not escape me that to an "N. or M." of your enlightened mind, a question may very naturally arise wherefore should I,—Thomas Ingoldsby,—throughout these Memoirs, describe myself under the *alias* of Charles Stafford ?

My dear Sir — or Madam — the fact is that when, some seven years since, this veracious narrative first appeared in the pages of "Immortal Maga," — a fly in amber, preserved only by the pellucid brilliance that surrounded it — I had reasons, as plenty as blackberries, for preserving a strict *incognito*.

Inter alia.—Miss Kezia Ingoldsby, a lady who had a redundancy of virtues, — and £13,000 in the Three per Cents Reduced, — had not then shuffled off this mortal coil.—She loved green tea, and hated an author.—The bare idea of having such an animal in her own family would have been to her murder and sudden death.

“Breathes there” a nephew “with soul so dead” who, under such circumstances would incur the guilt of Aunticide?

I dared not take upon myself the responsibility of massacring a Maiden possessed of so much property in the funds.

Aunt Kezia (“rest and bless her !”) has since exchanged her earthly employment of manufacturing *amateur* card-racks, carpet-slippers, and urn-rugs, for that of renovating an unmentionable portion of bachelor costume — elsewhere.

Then why continue the *alias*?

Why, the fact is, the alteration, now, would create a good deal of trouble, besides, perhaps, inducing a suspicion that there were no such persons *in rerum natura* as either Mr. Stafford or Mr. Ingoldsby.

Indeed "I happen to know,"—as poor Tom Hill used to say,—that there are sceptical individuals who, even as matters stand, have not hesitated to aver that I have quite as much right and title to the one name as to the other.

Heed them not, gentlest of Epicenes! — Believe me when I assure you that wherever Charles Stafford is on the scene,

*"Mutato nomine de me
Fabula narratur!"*

And that I am, and ever shall be,
With the most profound,
And down to the very centre of,
Gravity,
Your most devoted,

THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

Tappington Everard,
March 20, 1841.

SOME ACCOUNT

OF

MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

CHAPTER I.

Oh, Love ! Love ! — Love is like a dizziness : —
It winna let a puir body gang about his business.

Old Song.

OF MY COUSIN NICHOLAS. — HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND
EDUCATION. — SHOWING HOW HE CAME TO BE BORN, AND
HOW I CAME TO BE COUSIN TO MY COUSIN NICHOLAS. —
OF MY COUSIN'S PROLICS, AND THEIR RESULT.

My Cousin Nicholas was the liveliest, the
sprightliest, the handsomest, and the cleverest
little fellow in the world—so said everybody,
—at least everybody that visited at the Hall—
and, “ what everybody says must be true.”

If there were any persons in the neighbour-
ing village of a contrary opinion, they were

of that description which usually comes under the designation of Nobody—the Attorney, the Parson, and the Doctor, for instance ;—besides, as my Cousin seldom came in contact with either of these worthies without his genius effervescing in some juvenile prank at their expense, their opinions were naturally the offspring of prejudice, and, of course, the less to be relied on. As to my Uncle, he looked upon this issue of his loins with mingled love and reverence, and frequently swore—for my Uncle had contracted a bad habit of anathematizing—that “there was more wit in Nick’s little finger” than in the entire corporeal economy of the whole parish, including the Churchwardens and Overseer.

Whether my Uncle proceeded upon any particular hypothesis in thus determining the locality of my Cousin’s talents, must remain a matter of conjecture ; to those who favour the supposition that he did, it may afford no slight confirmation to observe that, Master Nicholas’s jokes being invariably of a practical description, it is far from improbable that

the seat of wit, in his particular instance—for one would not rashly oppugn a system in the abstract—lay rather in his fingers' ends than in the more recondite recesses of the pineal gland.

—To those who maintain that my Uncle never formed an hypothesis in his life,—I have nothing to say.

This exuberance of fancy in my Cousin was for ever exhibiting itself in a variety of shapes, and usually more to the surprise than the delectation of those who witnessed its career. Indeed, it must be confessed, that if wit, like all other good qualities, be, according to Aristotle's idea, a medium between two opposite extremes, my Cousin's certainly inclined rather to the *Hyperbole* than the *Elloipsis*, inasmuch as it seldom happened but that, in the opinion of some one or other, he "carried the joke a little too far."

The education received by this hopeful heir of "an ancient and respectable family," was one commensurate with his abilities, and, in its earlier stages at least, admirably adapted to bring talents like his to their full maturity.

His father, Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, or, as he loved to write it, Bolevaincle, was the highest blossom of the genealogical tree which hung in his study, (a room so designated, *a non studendo*,) and shot up into a variety of luxuriant and overhanging branches from a root coeval with the Norman Conqueror, among whose more immediate attendants stood proudly eminent the name of Sir Roger de Bolevaincle.

This worthy Paladin performed, it seems, such good service at the battle of Hastings and elsewhere, that he was, like many others, his brave compeers and co-mates in arms, rewarded by his victorious master, when at length securely seated on the throne of these realms, with the grant of a castle and a lordship, the forfeited fief of some outlawed Saxon noble. Such, at least was the account frequently given by Sir Oliver to that most patient of all possible auditors, Captain Pyefinch; and if the style and title of his illustrious ancestor, through some unaccountable neglect, are not to be found either in Domesday Book, or the Roll of Battle Abbey, so trifling a circumstance can scarcely

impeach the credit due to an historical truth, in all other respects so well authenticated. Sir Oliver would have made an affidavit of the fact in any court in Christendom.

The castle, it is true, had long since mouldered into dust,—“*perierant etiam ruine!*”—nor did a single stone remain to tell on what precise spot of the domain the feudal habitation of the valiant and venerated Roger had existed, or, indeed, whether it had ever existed at all. Not so with the estate,—the “dirty acres,”—as Sir Lucius O’Trigger somewhat disparagingly calls them,—the rich arable land and the luxuriant pastures, the homesteads, the copses, the majestic oaks, many of which might, from their appearance, have afforded a grateful shade to the renowned progenitor of the family,—these still continued unimpaired in beauty and much increased in value, while to the possession of them the present representative of the race was, perhaps, as much indebted for the respect and precedence yielded him at the Quarter Sessions, as to the long list of illustrious Bullwinkles who had jointly and severally contributed to produce him.

But if the pride of ancestry were among the most conspicuous foibles of Sir Oliver, it was by no means so predominant as to repress in him the inclination to associate with others, his neighbours, less fortunate in their descent. His exalted birth, like the vaunted prerogative of the first James, was rather a theme on which its possessor loved to descant, than a principle to influence his actions; and the worthy Baronet's affability, especially to his grooms and gamekeepers, was even proverbial in the vicinity; nor was it long before Cupid, that most radical of levellers, who, as my Lord Grizzle so truly observes,

"Lords down to cellars bears,
And bids the brawny porter walk up stairs,"

exerted his equalizing influence on Sir Oliver, and convinced the most incredulous that the heart of his new votary was even more susceptible of love than alive to dignity.

The day had been cold, boisterous, and raw, the country deep and miry, while Reynard, taking advantage of all these circumstances in his favour, had led his pursuers a rather longer

round than usual. The Baronet reached his home, after an unsuccessful chase, chilled, wet, and weary ; the length of his ride had occasioned a proportionate increase of appetite, and as the readiest way of getting rid at once of two such uncomfortable sensations as cold and hunger, or rather, perhaps, governed by that ruling chance which so often decides the fate of mortals, he declined the splendid glories of the saloon for the more genial comforts of the kitchen fire.

The ample grate blazed bright and cheerful ; one end of it was occupied by — the Cook ! ! — in the very act of subjecting a most delicious rump-steak to the discipline of St. Laurence, — the flame reflected her glowing beauties to the oblique glances of her master, while the other extremity of the range administered the most vivifying warmth to his inmost recesses, as, with the skirts of his hunting-frock duly subducted and restrained by each encircling arm, he exposed to the fire that particular portion of the human frame which it is considered equally indecorous to present to a friend or an enemy.

Eleanor Skillet was round, plump, and,—at this moment especially,—rosy ; and Cupid, who is seldom very dilatory in his proceedings, did Sir Oliver's business in the frying of an onion. Seating himself (somewhat too suddenly for his comfort) in a huge arm-chair, the ruggedness of whose wicker bottom was much at variance with the yielding softness of the cushion that usually supported his august person, the enamoured son of Nimrod, like another great man in a similar predicament,

“Sighed and *ate*,
Sighed and *ate*,
Sighed and *ate*, and sighed again.”

Nor did the impression made by the winning graces of the buxom cook-maid prove a mere transitory fancy ; in the parlour, in the field, or the bed-chamber, despite the distractive cry of the dogs, or the notes of what bachelors call the “merry-toned horn,” her image failed not from this hour to present itself to his imagination ; it even broke his rest, and it is a well-authenticated fact, that during the three successive

nights which immediately followed the culinary expedition alluded to, the most nervous person in the world might have reposed tranquilly in any chamber on the same side of the house with Sir Oliver, without having his slumbers invaded by the deep-toned bass of that gentleman's nasal organ.

The Baronet, having once imbibed this master passion, was not a man to be long deterred, by any of that *mauvaise honte*, that distressing timidity which too often prolongs most unnecessarily the sufferings of impassioned swains, from making his ardent wishes known to the fair object that inspired them; indeed, it has been shrewdly conjectured, that the extraordinary wakefulness of the three preceding nights was the effect of consideration rather than of uneasiness, and had been produced rather by the operation of duly weighing within himself the "To be, or not to be?" than by any apprehension for the final miscarriage of his suit, should reflection eventually induce him to decide in the affirmative.

Of the precise nature of his original proposals,

various were the surmises and reports current among the neighbours ; certain it is, that four months after the decisive interview with Miss Skillet in the Hall kitchen,

—— “ to the nuptial bower
He led her, nothing loath,”

and received at the altar of the parish church of Underdown, the hand of the fair and lively Nelly, who, in something less than half a year afterwards, — being, as she averred, much alarmed by the noise and shouting of the rabble as she passed in her coach through a fair held on the village green,—presented him with a very fine little boy, marked on the back with a penny trumpet.

The robust and healthy appearance of the infant, introduced thus prematurely into the Hall, gave rise to many an admiring shrug, and many a sagacious shake of the head ; often too would a trifling elevation of the shoulders, accompanied by a corresponding dropping of the eyelids, take place as the young heir of the Bullwinkles was exhibited to the occasional inspection of the gossips of Underdown ; and

many a significant tone as well as gesture, intended to convey much more than met the eye or the ear, accompanied the communication of the birth of the hero of these memoirs to his aunt, the sister of Sir Oliver, and mother to the humble biographer by whose unpractised pen this eventful history remains to be commemorated.

This lady, on the marriage of her brother, had retired from Underdown Hall, feeling, and, indeed, expressing great indignation at the contamination caused by the hitherto unsullied stream of the blood of the Bullwinkles becoming thus intimately commingled with the plebeian puddle which stagnated in the veins of Nelly Skillet. Vain were all the remonstrances of her brother, who probably conceived that the aforesaid stream was infinitely too pure to admit the possibility of pollution, but that its clear current, like that of the majestic Rhone, must still flow on, undefiled by the accession of any meaner waters, which, though rolling in the same channel, it disdains to mix with, or to admit into its bosom. His utmost efforts did not avail to detain her one moment in the ancient

seat of her ancestors, thus desecrated, as she conceived, by the reception of so ignoble a mistress. She accordingly quitted the Hall on the day previous to the celebration of these inauspicious nuptials, proceeding to the house of an old friend and schoolfellow. By this lady, the wife of a wealthy commoner in an adjoining county, she was most cordially received, and her inmate she continued till her own union with Major Stafford, the younger brother of a good family, to whom she had been long and tenderly attached, an event certainly accelerated by the circumstance which occasioned her secession from her brother's roof.

Major Stafford was, as I have already hinted, of high unblemished lineage; but fortune in bestowing this mark of her good-will upon him, had exhausted all her favours, and denied him that portion of the good things of this world so necessary to secure to rank the respect it claims. He was what is commonly called "a soldier of fortune," that is to say, a soldier of no fortune,—but John Bull is peculiarly felicitous in misnomers of this kind. The man who

demands payment under a threat of arrest he terms a "Solicitor," names a cinder-heap in the suburbs "Mount Pleasant," and calls a well-known piece of water the "Serpentine River," because it is *not* a river, and because it is *not* serpentine.

The Major possessed little more than a high sense of honour, a generous and noble heart, a handsome person, his commission, and his sword. He was, in fact, the junior of three brothers: the elder, Lord Manningham, a General in the army, and at the period of which I am speaking, on foreign service, was a married man with a family; the second, the Honourable Augustus Stafford, who was fast rising into eminence in his profession as a barrister, remained a bachelor; while Charles, the youngest, having felt no decided inclination for the Church, to which he had been originally destined, had resolved to enter the army, and with his sword carve out his way to that distinction which his lofty spirit panted to attain. My mother's fortune, though little more than six thousand pounds, added to the income derived from his

commission, enabled them to live in comfort if not in splendour, till the birth of myself, their first and, as it eventually proved, their only child, and left, to dispositions happy and contented as theirs, little else on earth to be desired. I was six years old when this state of calm felicity was broken in upon by the regiment to which my father belonged being ordered abroad. The demon of discord had again unfurled the standard of war, and my father, now Colonel Stafford, was forced to obey the rude summons which tore him from the arms of his wife and child to encounter all the inconveniences and hazards of the tented field.

Lady Nelly, meanwhile, in the full possession of all that wealth and finery, which, when in single blessedness, she had been accustomed to consider as rivalling the joys of Elysium, did not find her sanguine anticipations altogether realized by the event which had put these objects of her eager wishes so unexpectedly within her grasp. True that, instead of cooking an excellent dinner for others, she had now only to undergo the fatigue of eating it herself; —that

London Particular Madeira, and an occasional sip of the best Cogniac, had superseded Barclay's Entire, egg-hot, and gin-twist; that the woollen apron, muslin cap, and pattens, had fled before flounces and furbelows, a yellow silk turban with a bird of Paradise to match, and a barouche and four:—nevertheless many things were still wanting to complete her happiness, while many circumstances were daily occurring to render her situation irksome and uncomfortable in the extreme.

The new Lady Bullwinkle was by nature of a social disposition, and finding little to amuse or interest her in the few ladies of the neighbouring gentry, who, from electioneering motives, were induced by their husbands to leave their cards at her residence, she sighed in secret for the less dignified but more enlivening entertainments of that servants' hall which she had so rashly abandoned. She still infinitely preferred a game at "Hunt the Slipper," or the mystic rites of the Christmas mistletoe, to all the more refined methods of killing time, practised by ladies of the rank in life to which

she was now elevated. This, her ruling propensity, however, she yet contrived sometimes to indulge, especially after the birth of my Cousin Nicholas, whose infantine wants frequently furnished her with an excuse for a descent to the lower regions; while, during the occasional absence of Sir Oliver, she was in the constant habit of witnessing, and to a certain extent joining with "Little Master" in, the merry pranks and facetious conceits of the parti-coloured gentry and Abigails in the kitchen, who, sooth to say, particularly in those festive moments which mark the commencement and termination of the year, were much more encouraged by the condescension and the "largesse" of "My Lady," than awed by her authority or abashed at her presence.

In so excellent a school, a boy of the most inferior abilities could scarcely fail of picking up much useful and valuable information; it is therefore far from surprising that a youth of Nicholas's great natural parts and lively genius should, in a comparatively short period, make such a progress as to create surprise and ad-

miration, even in his instructors. At eight years old, my Cousin was the veriest wag in Christendom.—Besides being thoroughly initiated in the mysteries of “Put” and “All-Fours,” “Blindman’s Buff,” and “Threadle-my-needle,” the superiority of his talents had evinced itself in a vast variety of ways; he had put cow-itch into the maids’ beds, and brimstone into his father’s punch-bowl; crackers into the kitchen fire, and gunpowder into the parlour snuffers; nay, on one peculiarly felicitous opportunity, when the annual celebration of his own birth-day had collected a party in the great dining-room of Underdown Hall, he had contrived to fix a large bonnet-pin, so perpendicularly erect, in the cushion about to be occupied by the Reverend Dr. Stuffins, as to occasion much detriment and inconvenience to that learned gentleman, whose agility on the occasion would not have disgraced Mr. Ellar, or the “Flying Phenomenon.” In the course of the same eventful day, moreover, he subtracted a chair from the deciduous body of his papa’s “legal adviser,” — amputated the apothecary’s

pig-tail,—and, by the ingenious adaptation of a fishing-hook and line, previously passed through the pulley of a chandelier, elevated with a sudden jerk the flaxen jasey and redundant tresses, heretofore the *dulce decus* of Miss Kitty Pye-finch, to a situation emulating that of Mahomet's coffin.

For this last *jeu d'esprit* he was certainly reprimanded by his father with more of severity than he usually exhibited, Sir Oliver being penetrated with the most profound respect for the lady, the honours of whose brow had been thus wantonly invaded. Indeed, the confusion of the party was not a little increased by the vehement anathematizing of my Uncle, who, in the first transports of his indignation, so far forgot himself as to apply his foot, with a sudden and irresistible impetus, to that precise spot in my Cousin Nicholas's system of osteology which appeared the best adapted for its reception, it having completely escaped the worthy Baronet for the moment that the gout had for a little time past been coquetting with his own great toe, a circumstance which this

rash manœuvre brought at once most forcibly to his recollection.

Nicholas up to this comparatively advanced period of his existence had formed no more distinct idea of physical force, as applied to his own person, than that which he might have derived from the vague intimation afforded by his nurse-maid's muse as she occasionally caroled,

“Dance-y, Diddle-ey Mopsey !
What shall I do with ye ?
Set ye in lap
And give ye some pap ?
Or get a good rod and whip ye ?”

As the menacing alternative had never been resorted to, he was, of course, equally astonished and incensed at the very unexpected manner in which his endeavours to contribute to the amusement of the company had now for the first time been received ; he yelled like a Catabaw, and ran roaring down to the kitchen, whither he was followed by Lady Bullwinkle, with a countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

After the lapse of some half-an-hour, passed in administering her consolations to his wounded

spirit, her ladyship at length succeeded in assuaging the poignancy of his grief, and in somewhat softening the excess of his resentment ; then having exacted from him a reluctant promise not to be comical any more that evening, she led him back to the parlour, apologizing, with a grace peculiarly her own, to the party, for the "sweet child's" having been "a little too funny." By the gentlemen her excuses were received with the most gratifying good-humour ; but Miss Pyefinch was by no means inclined to extend the olive-branch so easily.

This lady was a poetess—her soul all tenderness, sentiment, sympathy, and feeling ; of course, her nerves were sadly shattered by this attack, and she had hesitated for a moment as to the propriety of going into hysterics, but fortunately recollecting that the execution of such a measure would, in the present state of her head-dress, be far from advisable, she very considerably deferred taking so decisive a step till a more convenient opportunity should present itself, and gathering up her spoils, hastily retreated to compose an ode "To Sensi-

bility," in the course of which she took occasion to compare herself to Belinda, in the "Rape of the Lock," not omitting to cast a most Medusean glance on the offender, whom she encountered on the stairs in her retreat.

It would be tedious, not to say impossible, to recount the hundredth part of my Cousin Nicholas's brilliant sallies, of a similar description, that took place in the interval between this piece of pleasantry and an event which, for some time, had the effect of checking the ebullitions of his genius. This occurrence was the sudden death of his mother, Lady Bullwinkle, who having unluckily fallen from the top of the back stairs to the bottom, in consequence of treading on a few peas which my Cousin had placed there for the express purpose of giving one of the maids a tumble, broke an arm and a leg. When borne to her room, she positively refused to abide by the directions of Dr. Drench, who, as she shrewdly observed, "only wanted to starve her into taking his 'poticary's stuff." She resolved therefore to abide by a regimen prescribed by herself, in which roast-goose,

mock-turtle, and deviled-sweetbreads, were prominent articles. To this diet she rigidly adhered, seldom exceeding a pint of Madeira at a meal ; but whether it was that the injuries received were in themselves so serious as to baffle the art of medicine, or that, as Dr. Drench never failed to aver, her whole system of living was radically wong, it somehow happened that a mortification ensued, which carried the poor lady off, within a fortnight after the accident.

CHAPTER II.

The brave Roland ! the brave Roland !
False tidings reach'd the Rhenish strand
That he had fallen in fight !
And thy faithful bosom swoon'd with pain,
O loveliest maiden of Allemagne,
For the loss of thine own true knight !
Old Song.

RECONCILIATION.—AULD LANG SYNE.—THE BLARNEY-STONE.
RETURN OF THE KILLED AND WOUNDED.—“HARK ! MORE
KNOCKING !”

SOME six months after the decease of Lady Bullwinkle, my mother once more returned to take up her residence at Underdown Hall.

Poor Sir Oliver, although he had not absolutely “forgot himself to stone” on the loss of his lady, whose charms, sooth to say, had long since declined very much in his estimation, was nevertheless seriously inconvenienced by her decease.

The cares of housekeeping, to which he had never in his life been accustomed, were heavy and grievous. Previous to taking upon himself the rosy fetters of Hymen, his household affairs had been conducted by his sister, whose prudent management he had somewhat missed on the keys of office being transferred to his late lady; but when she too was called upon, though under different circumstances, to retire from the seat of government, his situation was lamentable indeed. The affairs of the home department got into sad disorder; the servants, he said,—nay, swore,—were worse plagues than any which infested Egypt of old;—over the men, indeed, he did with great difficulty preserve some little supremacy, but the women——! No, he must positively call in some more practised and efficient hand than his own to seize the helm and steer his labouring bark amidst the rocks and quicksands by which it was on all sides surrounded.

Two schemes especially offered themselves to his election;—the one, to make advances to his sister, whose husband was now in the Peninsula,

having left her in furnished lodgings in London ; —the other, to raise Miss Pyefinch to the vacant throne. — Pride and shame rendered him averse from the first measure ; besides which, he was by no means certain that Mrs. Stafford would extend the olive branch and come into his terms ; while a fearful awe of Miss Kitty's talents, and no very great inclination for her person, (which certainly bore little or no resemblance to the "statue that enchants the world,") threw serious obstacles in the way of his second expedient. It is true that Captain Pyefinch, her brother, an invalid officer on half-pay, was a great proficient in the noble science of backgammon, and moreover very excellent company, seldom interrupting the most long-winded of the Baronet's stories by any remarks of his own, which, of Spartan brevity, "few and far between," just served to convince his entertainer that his narratives were not thrown away on the listless ear of an unobservant or a somnolent auditor. The society of this interesting veteran would by the proposed match

be at once converted from a casual good into a permanent blessing ; but then the Lady——

For Miss Catharine Pyfinch, a maiden who owned to six-and-thirty, the worthy Baronet felt, it is certain, the greatest reverence and respect ; but then reverence and respect are not precisely the sensations with which a hale widower, in Sir Oliver's circumstances, would wish to be wholly and entirely penetrated towards the proposed partner of his bed and fortune. In the first place, her learning was so transcendent that his own faculties were often bewildered in the vain attempt to unravel the meaning of her commonest expressions ; then her sensibility was so exquisite, that if by chance, during her visits at the Hall, Sir Oliver found it advisable to horsewhip a refractory pointer, or kick an intruding cat out of the parlour, the scene never failed to overcome her ; and if, which was too frequently the case, an unlucky oath would slide out of the wrong corner of his mouth in her presence, the shock was electrical, and rendered her completely *hors de combat* for the rest of the day.

With all this, the Baronet had a high opinion of the good sense which enabled her to discover so many excellent qualities in himself; since, though she constantly assured him that they were open and visible to all mankind, still, with every disposition in the world to credit her, he could not, from the silence of every body else upon the subject, but entertain some doubts whether these said excellences were altogether so obvious to others as her own fine perception induced her to imagine. Then, again, her verses were so delightful;—not that Sir Oliver piqued himself upon his taste for poetry, which, sooth to say, had usually a narcotic effect upon him, but her glowing muse painted as exquisitely the noble actions of the renowned Sir Roger, the sage decrees of the learned Sir Marmaduke (a Whig justice of the peace in the reign of Queen Anne, whose portrait adorned the mantel-piece in the principal saloon), and the innumerable virtues of the whole race of Ballwinkle, that, even without the well-merited eulogium on the existing representative of that dignified family, Morpheus himself must have

thrown away his poppies, and hung on the recital with all the vigilance of the most insomnolent mouser.

Nevertheless, though the Baronet's ears were tickled, and his vanity gratified, his heart was not subdued: and wisely reflecting that there was little apprehension of losing the Captain's society, as he could not call to recollection that the gentleman had ever declined one single invitation to the Hall, or had hesitated to prolong his stay, when there, on the slightest intimation that such an extension would be agreeable to its inmates—remembering, too, that there was no reason to suppose Miss Kitty would cease to immortalize the glories of the family, though she were never to become herself a member of it—loath, moreover, to part so soon with his newly acquired liberty—he finally decided, one eventful evening, after losing eight successive hits to the Captain, and being somewhat annoyed by an incautious expression of the lady's aversion to tobacco, on writing to Mrs. Stafford, proposing a cessation of hostilities, and requesting her to resume that station.

at the head of his household which his unadvised nuptials had formerly induced her to renounce. Rome was not finished in a day, neither was Sir Oliver's epistle ; both, however, were, after much toil and labour, completed, and the old butler was despatched to Upper Seymour Street, with the letter which had been so long in the concocting, and which he faithfully delivered into Mrs. Stafford's own hands.

My mother was surprised, and a little agitated on perusing its contents. Years had elapsed since she had quitted her paternal roof, without any expectation of revisiting it again ; but the cause which had banished her thence was now removed, and a feeling, easily conceived, gave her a strong inclination to behold once more those scenes, which, in her early youth, had been her home,—her world. Habit and education had indeed combined to estrange her from her brother, more than is usual between members of the same family, even before his ill-assorted marriage ; still a sincere, if not a very ardent, affection had ever filled her mind towards him ; and, though somewhat quenched

but—I did not like the Captain ;—I did not like Miss Kitty, who had, however, contrived to make a friend of my mother, and was fast rising in her good graces in proportion as she declined in those of Sir Oliver.

This lady's conduct had indeed undergone a considerable alteration since Mrs. Stafford's arrival. Her Muse was still prolific, but it was no longer the panegyric of the house of Bullwinkle that formed its exclusive theme. The Baronet was no longer its object ; all the poetic artillery of the fair Sappho was now levelled at my mother. She sung of the delightful union of two sensitive souls, and the charms of female friendship.—My mother smiled.—She changed her strain to a recapitulation of all Mrs. Stafford's admirable qualities, attributing to her the excess of every virtue under the sun.—My mother frowned. She shifted her ground once more. The subject alike of her lays and her discourse was now the praises and merits of the gallant soldier, who, amidst dangers, difficulties, and death, still thought with fondness on the only object of his affections, and panted

for the hour when, his perilous duties all fulfilled, the pains of absence should be more than balanced by the transports of a joyful return to the embraces of his beloved.—My mother's flint began to melt, and an affection for me as violent as instantaneous, which seized the good lady the moment I was introduced to her acquaintance, completed her conquest;—Miss Pyefinch "had never seen so fine or so engaging a boy;" and before that day was over, Mrs. Stafford hesitated not to affirm that "Miss Pyefinch was really a very sensible woman, and possessed one of the best hearts in the world."

Sir Oliver whistled, and left the room, muttering something in an under-tone, which, from the only monosyllable that could be distinctly heard, related in all likelihood to a female greyhound that followed him out of the parlour.

Despite the *encomia* with which I was overwhelmed by her, I cannot say that the manners of my new friend made a very favourable impression upon me; nay, I must own that with respect to my Cousin Nicholas, (whom, by the way, I have too long neglected,) my temper was

even more fastidious. In vain did that facetious young gentleman exhibit some of the choicest specimens of his wit for my entertainment; in vain were the most jocose feats of practical ingenuity, feats which convulsed all the grooms and footmen in the house with laughter, brought forward to amuse me; in vain did he tie the wheel of a post-chaise, which had drawn up at a door in the village, to one of the legs of an adjacent fruit-stall, and occasion in consequence a most ludicrous subversion of the fragile fabric on the sudden movement of the vehicle, to the utter consternation of a profane old apple-woman, who loaded the unknown malefactor with her bitterest execrations;—in vain did he even exercise his humour on my own person, putting drugs of a cathartic quality into my soup, or removing the linch-pins from a pony-chaise which I was fond of driving about the grounds, and thereby occasioning me an unexpected descent from my triumphal car, accomplished with far more of precipitation than grace—still I was so weak as to remain in-

sensible to his merit, and even to look upon these sprightly sallies with some degree of anger and indignation. I have little doubt but that I must have appeared to him a very dull dog, and should in all probability have soon incurred his supreme contempt, but for an event which, I have since had reason to imagine, changed in some degree the nature of his feelings towards me.

The last accounts from Spain had stated the approximation of the two contending armies; and the public journals did not hesitate to speculate on the probability of an approaching engagement. These conjectures derived much additional strength from the contents of private despatches, and, among others, of letters received by my mother from her husband, who from his situation on Lord ——'s staff, had good grounds for supposing such a circumstance to be very likely to take place. My mother's anxiety was, of course, extreme; nor could I fail to partake of the same feelings, when one morning, the rest of the family being already

assembled at breakfast, my Cousin Nicholas, who was usually later than any other of the party, entered the room.

His countenance, unlike its usual expression, was serious, and even solemn; his step slow and hesitating, while a degree of disorder was visible in his whole demeanour. He took his seat at the breakfast table in silence, and began to occupy himself with his tea-cup, bending down his head, as if with the intention of shading his countenance from the observation of the company. My uncle at this moment inquired for the newspaper, the invariable concomitant of his morning meal, and was answered by the butler that he had placed it on the table as usual, before any of the family had come down, except Mr. Bullwinkle, whom he thought he had seen engaged in its perusal.

"And, pray, Mr. Nick, what have you done with it?" cried Sir Oliver. "I did not know you had been up so early."

"Done with it, sir?" stammered my Cousin. — "Nothing, sir,—that is, nothing particular. I have left it in my own room, I dare say; I can

fetch it, if you wish me, sir,—that is—but, perhaps, you will like to read it after breakfast!”—and his eye glanced significantly towards my mother.

Its expression was not to be mistaken.—She caught the alarm instantly, and rising from her chair, while her trembling limbs scarce sufficed to bear her weight, and her face turned ashy pale, exclaimed, “There is news from Spain! I am sure of it—and Stafford is killed!”

Her words were electrical, and a simultaneous conviction of their truth blanched every cheek.

“Killed!” returned my Cousin Nicholas—
“No, my dear aunt—that is,—I hope not; but—there has been an action,—a severe one, and it is as well to be prepared—”

Mrs. Stafford’s worst fears were confirmed; she fainted, and was carried from the room. In the confusion of the moment, no one thought of inquiring into the sad particulars of the disaster that had overwhelmed us. Sir Oliver first asked the question, and demanded to see the fatal paper. My Cousin immediately com-

plied with the requisition, and produced it from his pocket; saying coolly, as he put it into his father's hand, that "he was sorry to see his aunt so discomposed, as his uncle Stafford might not, after all, be killed,—or even wounded, as his name certainly was not in the list of either the one or the other."

"Not in the list!" roared Sir Oliver. "Then what the d—l did you mean, you young rascal, by alarming us all in this manner?" and stood with an expression of countenance in which joy, surprise, and anger, were most ludicrously commingled; while I, as the conviction, that my ingenious Cousin had merely been once more indulging his taste for pleasantry, flashed upon my mind, sprang forward in the heat of my indignation, and with a tolerably well-directed blow of my arm levelled that jocose young gentleman with the floor.

A yell, shrill and piercing as that of the fabled mandrake when torn by the hand of violence from its parent earth, accompanied his prostration, and the ill-concealed triumph which had begun to sparkle in his eye at the success

of his stratagem, gave way to a strong appearance of disgust at this forcible appeal to his feelings. But Sir Oliver, with all his partiality for his heir, was at this moment too angry to take up his cause; he ordered him instantly out of the room, while I hurried off to console my mother with the intelligence that the fears she had been so cruelly subjected to were altogether groundless, and that the affair, to use a frequent and favourite phrase of my Cousin Nicholas, was "nothing but a jolly good hoax from beginning to end."

CHAPTER III.

A doubtful fate the soldier tries
 Who joins the gallant quarrel—
 Perhaps on the cold ground he lies,
 No wife, no friend, to close his eyes,
 Or, vainly mourn'd,
 Perhaps return'd,
 He's crown'd with victory's laurel

DIBDIN.

—— Facilis descensus Averni;
 Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
 Hoc opus, hic labor est!—VIRG.

PENITENCE AND ITS FRUITS.—THE MORE HASTE THE WORSE
 SPEED.—THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.

I FOUND my mother still suffering severely under the impression that the blood of her beloved husband had mingled with that of many of his brave countrymen in crimsoning the plains of Talavera. Painful as it was to witness her distress, I almost dreaded to inform her that she had been imposed upon, lest the

sudden transition from despair to extreme joy, on finding her apprehensions for his safety entirely groundless, should prove too much for her agitated mind, and plunge her perhaps into a situation still more to be dreaded than that state of insensibility from which she was now beginning slowly to emerge.

Fortunately, while I was yet meditating on the best method of conveying the happy news to her with the caution it required, Dr. Drench was ushered into the apartment. The worthy old butler, on seeing the condition in which his mistress had been borne from the breakfast parlour, had hurried, unbidden, in search of that gentleman's assistance, and had luckily found him at his own house, which was situate scarcely a hundred yards distant from the avenue leading to the Hall. When he arrived, the good doctor was in the very act of mounting his galloway, a tight little Suffolk punch of more "bone" than "mettle," in order to pay a visit to a patient. Of course no persuasion was necessary, under the circumstances, to induce him to alter his route for the present; and,

having stored his pockets with a profusion of the usual restoratives, a very few minutes brought him to Mrs. Stafford's bed-side. Taking him aside to the window, I, in as few words as possible, recounted to him the cause of my mother's sudden indisposition, together with the real state of the case, the assurance of which would, I was persuaded, prove the most effectual remedy for her disorder; then leaving it to his discretion to announce the glad tidings in the manner most befitting the occasion, I retired from the room. The worthy doctor, not being blessed with a very keen relish for the ridiculous, was at first a good deal shocked at my narration, and, in the simplicity of his heart, cursed my Cousin Nicholas for "a mischievous young cub," but then, it may be observed in palliation, that Drench was but a plain man, with very little taste for humour. By his care and skill, however, together with the judicious way in which he communicated to his patient, after a free use of the lancet, the information which had indeed nearly again overwhelmed her, such beneficial effects were produced as to warrant him, on joining us in

the parlour below, in holding out the strongest hopes that no ulterior consequences of a more serious or unpleasant nature would attend the execution of my Cousin's frolic.

Sir Oliver pressed the doctor strongly to stay and partake of our family dinner; this invitation, however, frankly as it was proffered, he thought fit most positively to decline. Indeed, ever since the surreptitious abduction of his queue, which had taken place on the memorable occasion of the party formerly mentioned, he had been rather shy of committing his person within the four walls of Underdown Hall, except under circumstances of professional emergency. He had by this time, after infinite care and pains, succeeded in rearing another pigtail to a size and longitude nearly coequal with those of its lamented predecessor. It was once again *totus toros atque rotundus*, and its proprietor was therefore, not without reason, especially apprehensive lest the scissors of my Cousin Nicholas, scarcely less fatal than those of the Parcæ, might once more subject this cherished appendage to the unpleasant ceremony of a divorce. Despite, therefore, the Circæan allurements of a

fine haunch of forest mutton, his favourite joint, Dr. Drench shook me cordially by the hand, bowed to Sir Oliver and the Captain, and quitted the house.

My uncle, whose love and regard for his sister, always sincere, were, perhaps, greater at this than at any former period of his life, was truly rejoiced to find that no seriously unpleasant effects were likely to ensue from what, now his apprehensions were allayed, he again began to consider as a pardonable, though somewhat too lively ebullition of youthful vivacity; he had even begun to explain to the Captain, for the five hundredth time, what a *desideratum* it was that a boy should have a little mischief,—a “little spice of the d—l,” as he phrased it,—“in him;” the Captain, in no wise relaxing from his customary taciturnity, was very composedly occupying himself in arranging the men upon the backgammon board, and neither assented nor demurred to a proposition which he had so often heard laid down by his host before; while I, in that restless, fidgety state of mind which one feels when subsiding agitation has not yet quite sunk

into composure, was endeavouring to divert the unpleasant current of my thoughts, by turning over the leaves of the last new novel, brought by Miss Kitty Pyefinch from the circulating library at Underdown, when a strange medley of voices and confusion of sounds, portending some new calamity, and proceeding from the outward hall, arrested my attention, caused even the imperturbable Captain to raise his eyes from his game, and drew from Sir Oliver Bullwinkle the abrupt exclamation,—“What the devil’s that !”

The sounds evidently and rapidly approached ; in a few seconds the parlour door flew open, and a figure, which, by its general outline only, could be recognised as that of Drench, occupied the vacant space, while the background of the picture was filled up by an assemblage of sundry domestics, bearing clothes-brushes, and rubbers of various descriptions, and exhibiting a set of countenances, in every one of which, respect, and a strong inclination to risibility, manifestly contended for the mastery.

The unexpected appearance of such a phe-

nomenon excited scarcely less surprise and astonishment in my own mind than in that of Sir Oliver, who stood gazing on the apparition with symptoms of the most undisguised amazement, till a voice, broken by passion, and impeded by the mud, which filled the mouth of the speaker, stammered out—

“Look here, Sir Oliver! I beg you will look here—this is another of the tricks of your precious son Nicholas—his behaviour is unbearable, he is a pest to the whole neighbourhood, Sir Oliver.”

“Why, what on earth is all this about! What is the matter, my good friend?”—

“Matter!—the devil’s the matter—almost dislocating my neck’s the matter. I am a plain man, Sir Oliver”—no one who looked in poor Drench’s face could gainsay the assertion—“I am a plain man, and I now tell you plainly, that if you do not curb that young man’s propensity to mischief, some time or other he will come to be hanged—only see what a pickle I am in!”

The last sentence was uttered in a lachry-

mose whine, so different from the highly-raised tone in which the former part of the invective had been pronounced, that my uncle, who had begun to bristle at hearing the lineal heir of Sir Roger de Bullwinkle consigned thus unceremoniously to the superintendence of Mr. Ketch, was immediately mollified, and his attention being thus pointedly attracted to the rueful appearance exhibited by the Doctor, his anger was forthwith subdued. Dr. Drench was a little punchy figure of a man, standing about five feet nothing, plump and round as a pill; he was placed opposite to Sir Oliver, dilating his height to the very utmost, and if he did not on this occasion add a cubit to his stature, it was manifestly from sheer inability, and not from any want of inclination; his snuff-coloured coat, black silk waistcoat, kerseymeres, and "continuations," no longer boasted that unsullied purity, in all the pride of which they had quitted Underdown Hall, not half an hour before; a thick incrustation of dark blue mud, agreeably relieved by spots of the most vivid crimson, now covered them with plastic tena-

city, rendering their original tints scarcely discernible by the most microscopic eye. Nor had the visage of the unfortunate gentleman escaped much better, since, but for the sanguine current which flowed down the lower part of his face in a double stream, he might not unaptly have been compared to the "Man with the Iron Mask," so completely had the aforesaid incrustation adapted itself to the contour of his features.

If Pope's assertion be correct, when, following Ariosto, he pronounces that all things lost on earth are treasured in the moon, the Doctor's well-brushed beaver was, in all probability, by this time safely laid up in that poetic repository of missing chattels, for below it was unquestionably nowhere to be found; its place, however, was supplied by a cap of the same adhesive material as that which decorated his face and habiliments, affording strong presumptive evidence that whatever portion of his person had first emerged from the ditch he had so lately evacuated, his head had at all events taken precedence on his entry into it. His pig-tail, too, that darling object

of his fondest affection, to guard whose sacred hairs from the remotest chance of violation, he had so reluctantly declined the Baronet's proffered cheer, stood forth no longer a splendid specimen of the skill of Humphrey Williams, sole *friseur* to the village of Underdown, but now exhibited, indeed, a melancholy resemblance to the real appendage of that unclean animal from which it had metaphorically derived its designation.

Rueful, indeed, was the aspect of the worthy disciple of Galen, as he underwent the scrutinizing gaze of Sir Oliver, who found it very convenient at the same time to have recourse to a family snuff-box which he usually carried about his person; in this mode of proceeding he was imitated by the Captain, who now for the first time broke silence to request the favour of a pinch from the well-known *tabatière*, after which a more specific inquiry was instituted into the predisposing and proximate causes of Dr. Drench's disaster.

Those causes were, alas! but too soon made manifest.

My Cousin Nicholas, it seems, had encountered the Doctor at the Hall door on his return ; and had stopped him to make inquiries respecting the health of his patient, whose indisposition he vehemently deplored, uttering a thousand regrets that a silly joke of his own should have produced it. For this he declared he should never be able to forgive himself, although, as he protested, it had never entered his imagination that the trick could have been attended with consequences so alarming. Touched by his remorse, the good Doctor comforted him with the information that, if nothing occurred to produce a relapse, his aunt would not, he trusted, be so serious a sufferer as he had at first feared ; he then seized the opportunity to read his young penitent a short but energetic lecture on the folly and wickedness (so he expressed himself) of thus terrifying, or even inconveniencing others, merely to gratify a silly and mischievous propensity.

My Cousin Nicholas listened to these well-intended and well-delivered observations with the profoundest attention ; he heaved a sigh

at their conclusion, and with a becoming gravity assented to their justice, at the same time volunteering a promise that this offence should be his last. Pleased with the effect of his own oratory, and nothing doubting that the contrition of the youthful offender was, for the moment at least, sincere, Dr. Drench put one foot into the stirrup attached to his gallows, which a groom had now led out, and throwing his leg over the saddle, failed to remark that his proselyte had taken the opportunity afforded by his back being turned for the nonce, to introduce a large thistle beneath the tail of the quadruped on whose back he had now attained so perilous an elevation.

The effect was obvious and immediate: utterly unaccustomed to any application of a similar description, and highly resenting the indignity thus offered to his person, Punch, as sober a gelding as any in the three kingdoms, instantly evinced his sense of the degradation to which he had been subjected, by violent and repeated calcitrations, of no common altitude, and distributed in every possible direction. Becoming

every moment more eager to relieve himself from so disgraceful and inconvenient an adjunct as that which now encumbered and annoyed his rear, he at length took the resolution of starting off at score, and soon deviated so much from his usually rectilinear mode of progression as to convey his unfortunate rider to the edge of a large sewer, into which all the filth and drainings of the Hall stables, together with other not less noisome concomitants, eventually flowed. Here, on the very brink of this abyss, an unlucky curvet, describing an angle of forty-five degrees, dismounted the hapless equestrian, and precipitated him head foremost into the centre of the "vast profound."

But for the groom, who had brought the Doctor his horse, and who had witnessed the whole of the foregoing scene, poor Dr. Drench would probably have encountered a fate compared with which the not altogether dissimilar end of the "Young princes murder'd in the Tower" might have been esteemed a merciful dispensation, since, whether we subscribe to Walpole's "Doubts" or not, there is no rea-

son to imagine that the means employed for the suffocation of the Royal innocents was attended by that "rank compound of villanous smells" which served, in the present case, to heighten the catastrophe. By his assistance the sufferer was, with some difficulty, extricated from the imminent peril into which he had been plunged, and was reconducted to the Hall, whither he once more repaired for the double purpose of complaint and depuration.

These particulars were, not without some little trouble, at length collected from the soiled lips of the indignant Doctor, and confirmed by the supplementary attestation of the servant who had observed the transaction, and whose levity in giving his evidence—the fellow absolutely grinned—drew down upon him a well-merited rebuke from the Court. A summons was instantly despatched, commanding the immediate attendance of the accused,—but my Cousin Nicholas was at this precise moment nowhere to be found.

That considerate young gentleman, on witnessing the "Descent of Drench," being well

aware that liberty unexpectedly recovered is, in nine instances out of ten, abused, and most apt to degenerate into licentiousness, hastily followed the enfranchised steed, with the view of preventing any mischief which might accrue to himself or others from this his sudden manumission. The end of the avenue, which opened on the high-road near to the entrance of the village of Underdown, presented a formidable barrier to the farther progress of the liberated nag in the shape of a lofty gate, flanked on each side by a thick plantation of evergreens. To leap it was out of the question, as poor Punch held fox-hunting in utter abomination, and had never cleared anything more formidable than a gutter in his life;—to escape on either side was impossible,—the shrubs were absolutely impervious; so, having discovered during a moment of hesitation what the headlong precipitation of his flight had hitherto prevented him from perceiving, namely, that he had long since got rid of his old tormentor, the thistle,—all these considerations, joined with the recollection that he had neither galloped so long nor

so fast at any one time during the last fourteen years, induced the philosophic Punch to await quietly my Cousin's approach, and once more to surrender his newly-acquired freedom without making a single struggle to retain it.

Having thus possessed himself of a horse, my Cousin Nicholas thought he would take a ride.

Many reasons concurred to render his availing himself of the opportunity particularly advisable:—in the first place, horse-exercise is strongly recommended by the faculty, and has a tendency towards bracing the nerves;—then it happened to be a remarkably fine day;—inclination prompted, opportunity courted him, and he was, moreover, morally certain, from the situation in which he had last beheld him, that the owner of his Pegasus stood in no sort of need of him at present;—in addition to all which, an undefined suspicion had by this time entered my Cousin's head, that certain disputations bickerings might, by possibility, arise at the Hall out of the circumstances which had so lately taken place, and that a contro-

versy might ensue, in which he might find himself personally involved to an extent somewhat greater than would be altogether pleasant to his feelings. Now, my Cousin Nicholas hated argument and squabbling about trifles, nor was he ever known to enjoy a joke at his own expense.

Any of these motives, if taken separately, would have been sufficient,—there was no resisting them all in combination—so my Cousin cantered away, and, having a pretty taste, enough, for the picturesque, was highly delighted by several charming prospects of the surrounding country which he encountered in the course of his ride. So much, indeed, did they engross his attention, that time slipped away unheeded, and he did not reach Underdown Hall, on his return, till long after the hour which had dismissed the Doctor to his own “Sweet Home,” as well scoured, scrubbed, and scraped, as if he had gone through a regular course of brick-dust, sand, and emery paper.

CHAPTER IV.

Parmulâ non bene
Relictâ.—HON.

What, Sir ! do ye make us illegitimate ?

Sir Archy Mac Sarcasm.

THE "BOAST OF HERALDRY."—"THE PITCHER THAT GOES
TOO OFTEN TO THE WELL," ETC.—A SCRAPE, AND A
DEPARTURE.

THESE last freaks of my Cousin Nicholas were too important, both in their nature and consequences, to admit of their being passed over without some little notice. Dr. Drench, in addition to the deranged state of his wardrobe and osteology, complained bitterly of the injury sustained by Punch, who unluckily, from some cause or other, happened to fall very lame about this period, a circumstance which the

Doctor failed not to attribute to my Cousin's equestrian performances ; and he positively refused any farther attendance, friendly or professional, at Underdown Hall, while it should contain so facetious an inmate. My mother availed herself of the occasion to renew, in the most forcible terms, certain suggestions previously made as to the propriety of her nephew's removal to some public seminary, where, under the pruning and training hand of a skilful master, those vigorous shoots of intellect might acquire a proper direction—hinting, at the same time, that considerable danger might arise, lest, like all other plants of equal exuberance, his genius, from being allowed to run wild and uncultivated, might eventually become weak and exhausted, or even perish immaturely, from the force of its own luxuriance. She even went so far, when once more sufficiently recovered to join the family circle, as to make his temporary secession from home the *sine quâ non* of her own continued residence there. It may, however, be doubted, after all, how far her well-meant remonstrances would have succeeded with Sir

Oliver in inducing him to part from his darling Nicholas, had not that young gentleman's star assumed at this time a peculiarly malignant aspect, and impelled him, in perfect contradiction to his usual custom, to direct the next effort of his wit against no less a personage than the Baronet himself.

A long passage at the farther extremity of the mansion (used in the late Baronet's time as a laundry, but dignified by the present with the name of the "Northern Gallery") contained, among much other curious matter, a series of portraits, representing sundry, real or supposed, worthies of the illustrious house of Bullwinkle. At the extreme end stood the redoubted Roger himself, or rather his armour, consisting of an habergeon, or shirt of chain mail, a cuirass, which some hypercritical Meyrick might not improbably have referred to a later age—a helmet, gauntlets, and shield; all of which had, till within these few years, occupied a niche in one of the aisles of the parish church of Underdown. They had there been long in the habit of swinging suspended over a tomb,

on which the mutilated remains of a recumbent figure still reclined, though so much defaced, as to render it difficult to pronounce, with any degree of certainty, whether it were the effigies of a human being or not. At its lower extremity, however, those parts which corresponded to the legs of a man were manifestly crossed, and this circumstance at once induced Sir Oliver to pronounce it to be the tomb of a Crusader,—and, if of a Crusader, *a fortiori*, of that flower of chivalry, the magnanimous Roger himself;—nay, so far did he carry his enthusiasm in favour of this hypothesis, that nothing but the sacred character of the offender had prevented him in his earlier years from challenging a former incumbent of the parish, who observed, with more of levity than of reverence, that “the position was, undoubtedly, that either of a Templar or a Tailor.” This palpable attempt to detract from his venerated ancestor eight-ninths of his consequence in the scale of humanity my Uncle never forgave.—But to return.

On the death of the aforesaid scoffer, my Uncle had obtained the consent of the Rev. Mr.

Bustle, whom he then presented to the living, (the Churchwardens, for divers weighty reasons, not opposing his wishes,) to remove the several pieces of armour, mentioned above, from their exalted situation to his own house, and as a due acknowledgement of their politeness, Sir Oliver presented the parish in return with a handsome set of communion-plate for the use of the church.

Having secured his prize, the Baronet's first care was to have the rust and accumulated impurities of so many years removed as much as possible, and the whole put into a complete state of repair, under the immediate and personal surveillance of the village blacksmith. In the course of the process, the remains of something like a device, which time and damps had combined to obscure, were discovered on the shield, and the delighted antiquary forthwith availed himself of the talents of a wandering artist, then luckily engaged in painting a new sign for the "King's Arms," to delineate (or, as he said, replace) upon its surface "three golden fetterlocks, clasped, in a field azure," the an-

cient heraldic blazonry of all the Bullwinkles. Thus renovated and restored to their pristine splendour, the arms of Sir Roger were erected in the manner of a trophy, over a pedestal inscribed with the Knight's name, and placed in the most conspicuous part of the gallery. This was ever after Sir Oliver's favourite apartment, and thither he retired on the evening succeeding my mother's attack upon him, to reflect upon her request, and upon the alternative which had been presented to his choice.

My Uncle perambulated the gallery for some time in silence, his hands crossed behind his back, and his eyes fixed upon the floor, while his footsteps, slow and unequal, betrayed the irresolution of his mind. His sister—so long lost, so lately recovered!—to lose her again seemed the very acme of misfortune, especially since the increasing comforts of his home, and his reduced expenditure, had taught him fully to appreciate her value. But then, again, his only son!—the beloved of his heart,—the delight of his eyes;—the youthful scion destined to transmit the blood of the Bullwinkles down

to the remotest posterity ; the last, sole hope of an honourable name !—True, indeed, Nick was, certainly, rather too bad—rather too much devoted to pleasantry, and of a disposition requiring the curb rather than the spur ;—but then to banish him from the home of his fathers, an exile from those scenes which his progenitors had so long (in all likelihood) trodden—which somebody had unquestionably trodden, and Bullwinkles more probably than anybody else ;—there was sorrow in the thought—it was *not* to be thought of.

“ No ! ” exclaimed my Uncle, facing about suddenly, and confronting the panoply of Sir Roger—“ No ! ” cried he, extending his hand with the force and majesty of a Demosthenes, “ never be it said that the heir of Underdown was, even for an hour, thrust like an expatriated fugitive from that roof which has sheltered so many generations of his forefathers !—never be it said that a youth of such noble endowments,—one so alive to the dignity of his family, so justly proud of his high descent and unblemished lineage, so—”

The glance of Sir Oliver rested for a moment on the emblazoned escutcheon of Sir Roger de Bolevaincle, whom he was just about to apostrophize—did that glance deceive him?—or had a miracle indeed been worked to cast a scandal upon his hitherto untainted pedigree?—He paused abruptly, and stepped forward with all the agility he was master of, in order to convince himself that the object which had “seared his eyeballs,” was but an “unreal mockery.”—But no! the phantasm, instead of vanishing at his approach, as he had half hoped it would have done, stoutly stood its ground, and presented to his horror-struck and incredulous gaze the apparition of a “*bend sinister*,”—that opprobrious mark of shame and illegitimacy,—drawn diagonally athwart the “golden fetterlocks in the azure field,” the immaculate and ever-honoured bearings of the Bullwinkles,—while the family motto *Sans peur et sans reproche*, so noble and so appropriate, was rendered completely illegible by a broad streak of black paint.

Sir Oliver rushed from the gallery in a paroxysm of rage and astonishment.—The servants,—every soul in the house, from my mother down to the kitchen-wench inclusive, were examined as to their knowledge of the author of this piece of atrocity. No one, however, was found able or willing to throw any light upon the subject, till Miss Kitty Pyefinch suggesting the probability, “that, after all, it was only a joke of Master Nicholas’s,” one of the footmen recollected that, some two days before, a carpenter, employed in painting and repairing the fences in the grounds, had complained to him that Master Nicholas had run away with his paint-pot and brushes.—The subsequent discovery and identification of these very articles in a corner of the gallery, no longer left any doubt as to the person of the culprit.

The fate of my Cousin Nicholas was from this moment decided. A decree, as irrevocable as those of the Medes and Persians, was pronounced, and another fortnight saw Master Bullwinkle an inmate of the parsonage house, occu-

pied by the Rev. Mr. Bustle, who to his clerical functions superadded that of master of the *ménagerie* to "a limited number of select pupils," in a parish a few miles distant, which he held *in commendam* with that of Underdown. The term of my own holidays having expired, I also left the Hall upon the same day on which my Cousin quitted it, and returned to Westminster.

CHAPTER V.

Delightful task ! to rear the tender mind,
To teach the young idea how to shoot !

THOMSON.

The Poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from Heav'n to earth, from earth to Heav'n ;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the Poet's pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE MARCH OF INTELLECT.—MUSE BULLWINKLIANÆ.—HOW
SLEEP THE BRAVE !

WHILE Mr. Bustle was labouring diligently in his vocation as scavenger to the Augean stable of my Cousin Nicholas's intellect, and endeavouring, with all the persevering spirit of the most industrious kitchen wench, to scour out certain stains and blemishes in his manners, derived, as he said, from the defective mode

of his early education,—while he was “preparing him for the University,” by a very summary process, not unlike that by which poulterers in the metropolis are said to prepare turkeys for the spit, viz. by cramming them with all sorts of good things, till their crops are ready to burst through repletion—I was proceeding, through the usual routine of the foundation of which I was an *alumnus*, towards the same desirable end ; and, as the plan adopted by my instructors was that of going on in the old, straightforward, beaten track used by our fathers before us, without bewildering themselves in the modern fashionable short cuts to the Temple of Knowledge, or “leaping learning’s hedges and ditches,” in order to arrive at their goal by a less circuitous route, it cannot be supposed that my progress in the *belles lettres* was half so rapid or so brilliant as that of my cousin. Indeed, the intellectual as well as the corporeal gullet of Mr. Nicholas Bullwinkle was of an extraordinary capacity, and, from its amazing powers of expansion, might almost have warranted a suspicion that it might be composed of

Indian-rubber. If its powers of digestion were not commensurate, but suffered the raw material which it received to remain crude and unconcocted, that could hardly be supposed to be the fault of his purveyor, the Rev. Mr. Bustle.

In point of fact, that learned gentleman was, in a very short time, mightily pleased with the proficiency of his new pupil, who, as he declared, evinced a decided taste for poetry, as well as for polite literature in general,—an opinion in which his father (who, to say the truth, was not, perhaps, qualified to do more than hazard a conjecture on the subject) perfectly coincided, so that in the space of a couple of years my cousin Nicholas ran an imminent risk of being considered an absolute *lusus nature*, a prodigy of genius. His fame about the same time was fully confirmed and established by the *fat* of Miss Pyefinch herself, whose exquisite tact and experience in all matters of this description rendered her, as we have before taken occasion to observe, sole and undisputed arbitress of the literary merits and demerits of every pretender within five miles of Underdown.

This excellent lady, whose prejudices at no very distant period had certainly operated considerably to my cousin's disadvantage, had been of late much propitiated by various effusions, some of them of rather an amatory cast, which, issuing from the pen of the young poet, had been, with the appearance of great devotedness, most humbly inscribed to herself; nor was the deportment of the juvenile bard, on his occasional returns to the Hall, such as wholly to supersede the idea that her charms, like those of the celebrated *Ninon de L'Enclos*, had achieved a conquest, and lighted up a flame in a youthful breast, when somewhat past what rigid critics might call the period of their maturity. Several of these tender lays were, by Miss Pyefinch, extolled above all that Hammond or Moore ever wrote; and though many persons were of opinion, from the hyperbolical compliments contained in them, that Mr. Nicholas had either taken leave of his senses, or was only indulging his old propensity to "hoaxing," she never could be brought to subscribe to it.

One of these lyrics, containing less of passion

and more of sentiment than the generality of his effusions, I shall take leave to present my readers with. It was placed by him in Miss Pyefinch's hand one fine evening after his return from a solitary ramble in the garden, having been rudely written down with a pencil, and is, on the whole, no bad specimen of my cousin's poetical abilities.

THE POET'S BOWER.

A bower there is, a lowly bower,
In which my soul delights to dwell ;
No gorgeous dome, or storied tower,
Can charm my fancy half so well !

No Zeuxis ere its walls adorn'd,
No Phidias bade its columns rise ;
Such aids the humbler artist scorn'd,
Nor taught its towers to court the skies.

But the low wall's contracted bound
The Ivy's amorous folds entwine,
And wanton Woodbines circling round,
To deck the blest retreat combine.

The Lilae, child of frolic May,
There flings her fragrance to the breeze ;
There, too, with golden tresses gay,
Laburnums wave in graceful ease.

And there, in loveliest tints array'd,
How sweetly blooms the blushing Rose !
While round, a soft and varying shade
The Willow's bending form bestows.

Far in my garden's utmost bound
The modest mansion rears its head,
There noisy crowds are never found,
No giddy throngs its peace invade ;

No " stores beneath its humble thatch,"
Like Edwin's, " ask a master's care ;"
The wicket, opening with a latch,
Receives the lonely swain or fair.

Within inscribed, above, around,
Are lines of mystic import seen ;
And many a quaint device is found,
And many a glowing verse between.

'Tis here, at morn or dewy eve,
In meditative mood reclined,
The world, its pomps and cares, I leave,
And shut the door on all mankind.

Full many a tome's neglected weight,
Here, page by page, mine eyes survey ;
Full many a Patriot's warm debate,
And many a youthful Poet's lay ;—

Sweet ! oh sweet, the evening hour !
'Tis then I bid the world farewell—
'Tis then I seek the lonely Bower
In which my soul delights to dwell !

Miss Pyefinch was charmed with this production of my Cousin's muse;—the only thing that puzzled her was, whereabouts this nice little retreat could possibly be situated, as memory refused to supply her with any edifice about the grounds at all answering the description given of it.

Sir Oliver, indeed, hazarded a suggestion, but the fair Sappho was highly scandalized at the insinuation it contained; and most indignantly rejecting the solution offered, finally concluded that the whole was merely a flight of fancy, or, as she was pleased to phrase it, “a Poetic fiction.”

* * * * *

The period was now rapidly approaching at which it was thought advisable that I should be removed from Westminster to the University. I was turned of eighteen, tall and active, and furnished with a sufficient *quantum* of Greek and Latin to make my *début* among those classic scenes, without any violent apprehension of a failure. Colonel Stafford had been for some time in England; his constitution, originally

not a strong one, had been much injured by the exertions, privations, and fatigues, necessarily attendant on a desultory and protracted series of campaigns ; of late, too, the mode of warfare had begun to assume a more 'decided character, and the "marchings and counter-marchings" were now, as the plans of the great commander who directed the operations changed from the defensive to the offensive, interspersed with skirmishes and actions, dangerous in the extreme during their progress, though ever glorious in their results.

Frequently exposed, from the nature of his official situation on the staff, to the hottest fire of the enemy, and urged by the innate gallantry of a disposition rather impetuous than prudent, into dangers which he might perhaps without discredit have avoided ; still the "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft" seemed to watch over my father's safety with unwearied vigilance. Often was the weapon levelled by man, but Heaven averted the ball ; and, with a single exception, he came out of every conflict scathless and uninjured.

It was not till after his return to England, whither he was at length despatched with the official accounts of the battle of —, and his subsequent retirement into the bosom of his family, that the ravages made in his health, by his long-continued subjection to the hardships of a military life, passed under the inauspicious combinations of an active enemy and an ungenial climate, were fully apparent. A wound, too, originally of a trivial nature, as his friends had been taught to believe, but which had never been entirely healed, now joined to occasion alarm to his friends, and to give a character to other symptoms which betokened a sure though gradual decay.

Mrs. Stafford for a while shut her eyes, and remained obstinately blind to what was perfectly apparent to every one else; she fondly flattered herself that the increasing debility of her husband might be successfully combated by quiet, his native air, and the soothing attentions of conjugal affection.—Alas! her hopes were groundless;—the hectic on his cheek became, it is true, more vivid, but it contrasted painfully

with the sallow paleness of the rest of his countenance, while a short dry cough, and his attenuated form, evinced but too surely that his stamina were affected, if not reduced.

The symptoms were but too prophetic: as spring (the third since his return) advanced, his inability to contend longer against disease became daily more evident, till early in the fatal month of May, a month so critical to invalids, my dear father resigned his upright and honourable spirit into the hands of Him who gave it.

My poor mother was overwhelmed with the most profound grief by this melancholy event; the more so, as although of late the conviction had been forced upon her that Colonel Stafford was in a rapidly declining state, still she had never contemplated the probability of so sudden a dissolution of those ties which formed the principal joy of her existence. It was done, however.—Those ligaments of the soul which bound her to an adored and adoring husband, were at length severed; and till their reunion in a future world, I was the only object to

which she was now to look for comfort and support. My father's death had been so sudden, that I had barely time to reach home, from Christ Church,—of which I had some time since become a member,—in order to receive his last blessing. He died like a Christian, calm, fearless, and resigned, with his latest breath commending my mother to my care.

Years have since rolled on, but the moment is fresh as ever in my memory.—May I never forget it !

CHAPTER VI.

He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her downcast modesty concealed.

THOMSON.

A LETTER.—A JOURNEY.—MUSIC HATH CHARMS.—DUCKING
AND DODGING.—A CHASE.—THROWN OUT AT LAST.—
STOLEN AWAY!

LITTLE of moment occurred either to myself or my friends during the next two years. My mother was still an inmate of Underdown Hall, where her attentions were now become absolutely indispensable to the comfort of her brother. A settled, but calm melancholy, had succeeded to those severer transports of grief which had engrossed every faculty of her mind during the first burst of her affliction at the loss of my father, and now, if not happy, she was at least resigned. My Cousin Nicholas had entered

himself a gentleman-commoner of Brazennose College, but so widely different were our pursuits and habits, that, although such near neighbours, we saw but little of each other; nevertheless, a tolerably good understanding was kept up between us, and, though rarely visiting, we always remained upon terms of civility.

One morning, at a rather earlier hour than was customary with him, Nicholas made his appearance at my rooms in Peckwater, and invited himself to breakfast with me. I soon found that his object in paying me this friendly visit was to borrow a little money, a circumstance which had occurred once or twice before, at times when his exchequer had been at a low ebb. My own finances happened on this occasion to be by no means in a flourishing condition, and I was on the point of confessing my inability to accommodate him at present, when a letter was delivered to me by the "Scout," which, from its size and weight, appeared to contain an enclosure.

It was from my mother, requesting to see me immediately, "upon urgent business," which,

as she informed me, was of a nature calculated to influence, and that very materially, my future prospects in life. She declined entering into particulars till we should meet, conjured me to lose no time in setting out to join her, and expressed her hopes of seeing me on the third day, at latest, from that on which I should receive her epistle.—The enclosure was a remittance of sufficient magnitude to obviate any difficulties of a pecuniary nature which might tend to retard my progress.

This supply came very seasonably for my Cousin Nicholas, with whom I immediately shared it, as the moiety would, I found, amply provide for my own wants on the journey I was about to undertake; a journey, the necessity for which I did not hesitate to acquaint him of, and heard, in reply, that the reason which had induced him to apply to me for assistance, was the impossibility of his otherwise carrying into execution a scheme he had entertained of proceeding *incognito* to London, for some particular purpose which he had in view. As he did not explain what this particular pur-

pose was, I thought it unnecessary to inquire into it, but acceded at once to the proposal which he now made, that we should travel to the metropolis together.

Little preparation was necessary for either of us; I hastily threw a few articles of dress into a portmanteau, and, through the interposition of my tutor, found no difficulty in obtaining leave for my immediate departure, more especially as I had already resided the number of days requisite for keeping the term, and the Easter vacation was at hand.

Not so Nicholas; — his irregularities had, of late, been too notorious for him to hope to obtain permission to secede one hour before the appointed time. This unlucky circumstance, however, he found means to obviate, by placing his name on the sick-list, or “pricking *ager*,” as he technically termed it; when, having directed his servant to draw his commons regularly from the buttery till his return — feeling, moreover, a moral certainty that this injunction would be faithfully observed, inasmuch as the said commons would of course be applied to

the sole use and benefit of the receiver during the interval — he walked with the greatest possible composure over Magdalen Bridge, and was taken up by my post-chaise at the foot of Heddington Hill, where the somewhat longer, but by far the most picturesque of the two roads that lead to the metropolis turns off abruptly to the right.

The day was beautiful, and my Cousin, on finding himself clear of the environs of Oxford without detection, proceeded to disencumber himself of sundry large silk handkerchiefs which enveloped the whole of the lower part of his face, and bade adieu to a voluminous surtout which had also assisted materially in disguising his figure during his walk. The silver waves of old Father Thames rolled at our feet in many a shining meander, through a scene of more than Arcadian loveliness, as we entered the town of Henley. Here we partook of a hasty dinner, when, eager to reach London, I resolutely resisted all Nicholas's covert insinuations respecting the excellence of the wine, — “the best, by far, he had ever tasted at an inn,”—

as well as his more open proposals for the discussion of one more "quiet" bottle. The horses were again put to, and in due time deposited us safely at the Tavistock Hotel, in Covent Garden.

Having drunk a cup of coffee, and got rid of the uncomfortable sensation which usually succeeds a journey, however easily and pleasantly performed, Mr. Bullwinkle once more suggested that a bottle of Lafitte would prove an excellent succedaneum in the absence of all other amusement; observing at the same time, that the day being a Wednesday in Lent, and all theatrical entertainments of course suspended, he should not otherwise "know what to do with himself."

My head was so full of conjectures as to the nature of "the urgent business" which had occasioned my being thus suddenly summoned from my studies, and my mind was so exclusively occupied in forming a thousand improbable guesses on the subject, that I should in all likelihood have acceded to the proposal, from mere antipathy to any change of place

which might tend to disturb the current of my ideas, had I not plainly perceived that the madeira which we, or rather he, had swallowed at Henley, had already performed its part, and elevated my Cousin's spirits quite as high as prudence would sanction. Well knowing that his general propensity to get into scrapes wanted not any excitation from the "Tuscan grape" to call it into play, I once more positively declined joining him in his potations; and in order to prevent his sitting down and getting drunk by himself, an alternative which I had little doubt he would adopt, proposed that, as neither play nor opera was exhibiting, we should look in at Covent Garden, and listen to the delightful music of "Acis and Galatea." Nicholas said, indeed swore, that an Oratorio was "the greatest of all possible nuisances," and that he would as soon "be crucified," as listen to one; but finding me absolutely determined not to "make a night of it," he at length, though with undisguised reluctance, agreed to accompany me rather than "snore over the bottle" by himself.

We found the house very full, and, being still in our travelling dresses, resolved, in order to avoid the risk of encountering any of the more fashionable part of our acquaintance in the present deranged state of our habiliments, to go into the pit ; for at the period to which my narrative refers, the "customary suit of solemn black" worn in the boxes by both sexes during Lent, at what were then literally "performances of sacred music," had not yet yielded to the innovating hand of modern illumination. Our intention was carried into effect not without some little difficulty, for on our arrival every seat was occupied, and we were glad to take up our stations in "very excellent standing-room" near one of the benches, at no great distance from the orchestra.

The fascinating siren, Stephens, who had then just reached the zenith of her reputation, was never in finer voice ; and whatever unwillingness Nicholas might have originally felt to be "bored with their confounded catgut," still even he was not entirely proof against such enchanting melody. As to myself, with a mind

naturally delighting in the concord of sweet sounds, a taste I had inherited from my mother, whose whole soul was attuned to harmony, I had for some time neither eyes nor ears for anything but the fair songstress on the stage ; till at length, during a temporary cessation of her exertions, occasioned by a movement in the accompaniment, a slight, and half-suppressed exclamation of delight drew my attention to my immediate neighbour, who occupied a corner of the bench close to which I was standing.

It was a female, clad, like the major part of the audience, in mourning, over which was thrown a loose garment of grey cloth, then termed "a Bath cloak ;" nor did anything in her dress indicate a superiority over the generality of those who usually occupied that portion of the theatre in which she had placed herself ; still the whole appearance, both of herself and her companions, evinced their respectability.

These latter consisted of an elderly female in the modest garb of middle life, having much the appearance of a substantial tradesman's wife,

and a lad whom I conjectured to be her son ; the latter was about sixteen years of age, and, by his frequent yawns and sleepy demeanour, seemed to be a fellow-sufferer with my Cousin Nicholas, and to have imbibed at least some portion of that *ennui* which the latter always professed to feel, and probably experienced, whenever he entered a music-room. On these two, however, I bestowed but a very cursory glance, my whole attention being immediately and involuntarily engrossed by the lovely creature to whom the old lady performed the office of *chaperon*, for that any closer connexion existed between her and the being who was fast becoming the object of my idolatry, my whole soul revolted from believing.

Early accustomed to mix in good society, I had enjoyed many opportunities of seeing most of the celebrated *belles* of the day, but never, in the whole course of my experience, had I met with a form and countenance so well calculated to make an impression on the susceptible heart of a romantic and amorous youth. of one-and-twenty. She appeared to be some

three or four years my junior, her complexion was dazzlingly brilliant, her features were cast in the finest mould of beauty, while the vivacity and intelligence that sparkled in her dark blue eyes evinced the powers of the mind within, that gave animation to so expressive and charming a countenance. The fixed intensity of my gaze at length attracted her notice, and she blushed deeply as her eye sank beneath mine; yet was there a something, in the occasionally recurring glance which I encountered, that told me her shrinking from my regard was rather the effect of modesty than displeasure.

While I was meditating in what manner I should introduce myself to one who had already made a much greater progress in my good graces than even I myself was aware of, "that which not one of the gods could venture to promise me, chance spontaneously offered to my acceptance." * One of the light-fingered fraternity, who so generally frequent places of amusement, was, while labouring in his vocation, detected by my Cousin Nicholas in the very act of clan-

* Turne, quod optanti tibi Divum promittere nemo Auderet, volvenda dies, en, attulit ultro.—VIRG.

destinely subtracting from the coat-pocket of the sleepy-looking youth just mentioned, as it stood most invitingly open, a large silk handkerchief, therein deposited till the termination of the performance should restore it to its original use, that of protecting the lower part of his physiognomy from the rawness and inclemency of the night-air. Now as it formed no part of my Cousin's system of politics to sanction any mischief that neither amused nor interested him, and as he foresaw, in a moment, that the bustle consequent on the detection of so nefarious a piece of delinquency might probably do both, and be infinitely more agreeable and enlivening than even the music of the spheres, had he been within hearing of their celestial harmony, he hesitated not an instant to proclaim his acquaintance with the deed then in the course of perpetration, and to interrupt the meditated retreat of this dexterous conveyancer.

The disturbance which ensued may be imagined. The offender, thus taken in the very act, or, as the Scotch have it, "with the red hand," found it useless to deny, and impossible to justify, his unauthorized appropriation of

another's chattels. A portion of the surrounding spectators prepared immediately to put in force that very summary law, of which the Mobility of England might, in those days, have been considered at once the framers, the expounders, and executioners, but which, much to the regret of all good citizens, has of late years sunk into desuetude. No one then dreamed, in such cases, for one moment of "the New Police," or an appeal to "his Worship:"—to their own salutary decree did they have immediate recourse; which said decree, as it was not to be found in any of the books, belonged most probably to the "unwritten, or common law," and directed that the guilt of the criminal should be forthwith washed and purged away through the medium of the nearest pump.

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the conception, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream."

And so it was on the present occasion. While that highly respectable part of the community, to which I have just alluded, were, in the exercise of their undisputed prerogative, hurrying

off to condign punishment the atrocious depredator "vot had priggged the gemman's wive," in full accordance with the statute (by them) in that case made and provided, considerable confusion arose in the immediate vicinity of the transaction; certain ladies shrieked, others fainted, while a few *ultras* both shrieked and fainted. — My charmer did neither; but the agitation of her manner, and the lily, now fast usurping the place of the rose upon her cheek, showed that she was not altogether insensible to alarm.

Perhaps there is no moment so favourable for a lover as that in which the object of his affections either is, or fancies herself to be, in danger, with no other protection to fly to but his own. I failed not to seize the golden opportunity, and improved so well the few minutes of bustle which ensued, as not only to introduce, but to ingratiate myself considerably both with the damsel and the matron. As to the "lubberly boy," this little fracas, in which his handkerchief had borne so distinguished a part, (an article, by the way, which the gen-

tleman, who had rescued it from the fangs of the pickpocket when Nicholas seized his collar, forgot, in the excess of his indignation, to return to its owner,) had given a fillip to nature, and he was actually wide awake for a full quarter of an hour; but as his mind was entirely occupied by the magnitude of his loss, his presence gave me not the slightest molestation.

I was much more annoyed by Nicholas, who, in spite of my endeavours to keep him in the background, would occasionally interfere; nor could I help heartily wishing that he had carried his love of justice so far as to have gone and assisted at the ceremony of immersion, — whether as *pumper* or *pumpsee*, I should not have cared one farthing.—As things stood, I was obliged to let matters take their own course; though I certainly could have dispensed with his society when, at the conclusion of the Oratorio, he made a daring, though happily an unsuccessful attempt, to induce the young lady to accept his assistance in getting clear of the crowd, and to leave me the more honourable, but less pleasing, post of acting as escort to her antiquated

companion. This arrangement, however, I was sufficiently on the alert to frustrate, and almost dared to flatter myself that the nymph lent her aid in rendering vain his manœuvre, as she thankfully accepted my arm, and afforded me the inexpressible delight of conducting her to a hackney-coach, which had apparently remained in waiting for the party. But notwithstanding the footing I had contrived to gain by my attention to their convenience during the disturbance, as well as afterwards, I nevertheless found it impossible to extract from either the young or the old lady the secret of their address, and was inexpressibly disappointed when, having placed them in the coach, and received their acknowledgements for what they termed my politeness, the matron, simply saying to the coachman, "To the house you brought us from!" made me a most gracious bow, and drew up the window.

The vehicle was in motion the next minute, but not before honest *Jarvis*, in return for a half-crown piece, had sold me the interesting intelligence that the place of his destination was

Jermyn Street. Determined, however, to be fully satisfied as to the accuracy of my information, as well as to ascertain the particular house to which the party was bound, I failed not to follow the coach, which proceeding at a very moderate pace, enabled me to keep it in view without any difficulty, till I saw it eventually disembody its precious contents at the door of a respectable-looking house in the street above-named.

My first care on having thus fortunately, as I supposed, succeeded in "marking the covey down," was to put myself in possession of the number of the mansion ; which done, I proposed to return for the present to the hotel. But this arrangement by no means met the ideas of my Cousin Nicholas, who had kindly, and without any solicitation on my part, accompanied me in the chase. He now found himself, at its termination, very unexpectedly, in the immediate vicinity of an edifice which contained an object possessing charms, to him not less attractive than those which had operated to bring me into the same neighbourhood. This object of my

Cousin's devotions was a certain table, most beautifully variegated and adorned with a motley covering of red and black cloth, exhibiting, moreover, the delightful accompaniment of sundry packs of cards, together with all and every the sacrificial instruments necessary for offering up human victims at the shrine of Plutus. Many were the persuasions made use of by my Cousin to induce me to accompany him into the penetralia of this temple of Mammon, the more recondite mysteries of which he very kindly offered to initiate me in. Resisting all his importunities to engage in so dangerous a pursuit, and finding it useless to persuade him to alter his own determination, I at length quitted him in the street, and retraced my steps to the Tavistock,—to dream of an angel—in a Bath cloak.

The following morning I arose an hour before my usual time, and scarcely allowed myself a few moments to swallow a hasty breakfast, so eager was I to avail myself of the little services which I had been fortunate enough to render my goddess the night before, by calling to “hope she had experienced no serious ill effects from her

alarm." I was, besides, in a complete fidget lest Nicholas, too, should be taken with a freak of early rising, and should insist on joining me in my proposed visit. In this respect, however, my fears were perfectly groundless, as I found, on inquiry, that worthy had not been very long in bed, having, as I doubted not, spent the major part of the preceding night in that rapturous vacillation of spirit produced by the alternation of good and bad fortune in some exciting game of chance. He was still sound asleep; I took good care not to disturb him, and set out on my adventure alone.

However deserving they may be, we know that "it is not in mortals to command success"—a truth which I was destined to experience most painfully in the present instance.

On applying at the house in Jermyn Street, I was astounded by the information that no ladies, answering the description which I gave, resided there at all, although two such had certainly taken tea the day before with "Mrs. Morgan, a lodger who occupied the first floor;" that they had afterwards gone away in a hackney-coach,

—to the theatre, it was believed,—and had returned late in the evening, but that they had only remained a few minutes, when, having partaken of the contents of a tray which had been set out in expectation of their arrival, they had finally taken their departure in a handsome dark-green chariot, which came to fetch them away.

This, at least, was the account furnished me by the servant girl, whose good offices I secured by a trifling present, and who also informed me, that she had never seen the younger lady of the two before, and the elder not above three or four times.

Much disconcerted at this intelligence, I could not refrain from cursing my own stupidity in allowing them thus to escape me, though wiser heads than mine might have been puzzled to know how to have prevented it, as not the slightest suspicion of their being merely visitors at the house to which I traced them, had ever entered my mind. My only course was to promise the girl an additional gratuity, if she could succeed in learning the place of their abode ;

which done, I walked, with a very different step, and in a very different frame of mind from that in which I had set out, towards St. James's Park, revolving with myself the means which it would be most advisable for me to adopt, in order to obtain the wished-for intelligence. Nor did it fail to present itself to my recollection, that a very short time indeed was left me to make the necessary inquiries, unless I should altogether give up the idea of attending my mother's summons by the day appointed in her letter. Twenty-four hours, however, I thought I could command, and wonders might be achieved in half that time by a sincere and enterprising lover; but vain were all my efforts to discover my fair *incognita*;—in vain did I traverse half the streets at the west end of the town;—in vain did I peer and peep into every shop I passed, and scrutinize every window with the keenness of a familiar of *La Santa Hermandad*. Once, indeed, I thought I caught a glimpse of a figure similar in the delicacy of its proportions to that of my charmer, and my heart beat high with hope renewed; but, alas! only to increase

my disappointment, when, after I had sorely bruised my shins, and beat all the breath out of my body, by "making a cannon" between an apple-barrow and an old clothesman, in my hurry to "head" the fancied angel, my eyes were blasted by the sight of a face as hideous as age and ugliness could make it.

Weary and dispirited I at length gave up my fruitless chase; but, ere I returned to my hotel, resolved on making one final and desperate effort to recover the scent. With this view I entered a jeweller's shop, whose windows displayed "an elegant assortment" of trinkets, and having purchased a plain but handsome vinaigrette, which I afterwards replenished at a perfumer's, once more retraced my steps to Jermyn Street. From my new auxiliary, the maid, I soon learned that I had nothing farther to expect in that quarter, at present, in the way of intelligence, and therefore boldly demanded to see Mrs. Morgan herself,

Fortunately, as I then imagined, that lady was at home; so, desiring the girl to announce me simply as "a gentleman on business," I was

introduced forthwith into the presence of an elderly female, furnished with one of the most forbidding visages that it has ever been my lot to encounter. Nothing daunted, however, at her "vinegar aspect," I proceeded at once to unfold the "nature of my business," which was, as my readers will doubtless have anticipated, neither more nor less than "to restore to the *elder* of the two ladies I had the honour of escorting from the play-house, the evening before, a vinaigrette, which I had unwittingly retained after its use was rendered superfluous by the recovery of *her daughter* from the terror she had experienced, and to express my fervent hopes that her alarm had been attended by no unpleasant consequences."

Whether it was that the old snap-dragon suspected my veracity from the expression of my tell-tale countenance, I knew not ; though I think it far from improbable, as I never in my life could acquire from my Cousin Nicholas that happy nonchalance with which he would utter you half a dozen lies in a breath, without the slightest embarrassment or discomposure of mus-

cle: certain it is, that my tormenting auditress soon convinced me that it would be easier to extract a guinea from a miser's purse, or a plain answer from a diplomatist's portefeuille, than to obtain from her the information I so eagerly panted to obtain.

With an excess of good breeding, ludicrously at variance with the sourness of her physiognomy, she eluded my request to be admitted to see the lady, parried all my inquiries, thanked me for my civility, and, requesting me to give myself no farther trouble about the trinket, (which she pledged herself to return to the right owner at an early opportunity,) fairly bowed and curtsied me out of the house, without my having been able to arrive at any other certainty than that I had thrown away five pounds ten shillings upon a most unprofitable speculation, and one which presented not the shadow of a return; in short, the cool, sarcastic demeanour of that terrible old woman fully convinced me that, from the very first, she had penetrated my motives, seen through my stratagem, and made my whole scheme recoil upon myself. One advantage,

however, I had at least gained by my attempt ; that was the securing still farther the assistance of my friendly Abigail, to whom I made the most magnificent promises on the simple condition that she should transmit the desired intelligence to an address with which I furnished her ; and, with nothing beyond this frail foundation to rest my hopes upon, I at last quitted London, leaving Nicholas behind me, and fully resolving to extricate myself as soon as possible from any engagement which my mother might have formed for me, that I might return to the metropolis, where only I had any hope of succeeding in my search after the, perhaps unconscious, possessor of my runaway heart.

CHAPTER VII.

Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
And merrily gain the stile-a !
Your merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

Autolycus.

THE WAY-WORN TRAVELLER.—THE MYSTERY DEVELOPED.—
GOOD INTENTIONS.—A HINT AND AN INVITATION.—NOUS
VERRONS.

THE evening of a cold, wet, and dreary day in the month of March saw me once more at Underdown Hall, as gloomy, uncomfortable, and thoroughly out of temper as any dutiful young gentleman in the world could possibly be when thwarted in his pursuits by the untimely interposition of his mamma. The genuine joy, however, expressed by my dear mother at my

arrival, and the cordial greetings of Sir Oliver, soon alleviated, if they failed to dissipate entirely, my chagrin. I say nothing of the friendly shake of the hand vouchsafed me by the taciturn captain, or the simpering congratulations of Miss Pyefinch, who remarked, in the most flattering manner, that " Master Stafford " (I was nearly twenty-two, and measured five feet eleven in my stockings) " has grown surprisingly, and is very much improved altogether since I saw him last."

I found the worthy baronet as stout, as jovial, and as proud of his ancestry as ever; time, indeed, had laid a lenient hand on him, and, but that his hair had begun to assume the tint of the badger rather than that of the raven, little difference was to be observed in his appearance, from that which he had exhibited at the time when I had first been presented to his notice. Not so Mrs. Stafford; her health had never been good since my father's death, and it was with pain I now remarked that she looked much thinner, and was evidently much weaker, than when I had last quitted her;—but her

spirits were still good, much better indeed than I had long been accustomed to see them, and her eye gleamed once more, occasionally, with a portion of that playful fire which during the lifetime of her husband had marked its scintillations.

She was evidently much pleased at something; but what that something was which afforded her so much apparent satisfaction, remained a mystery not to be solved till the following morning. I therefore repressed my curiosity as I best might, and retired to my couch, in the ardent hope of being visited in my dreams by enchanting visions of my fair but unknown enslaver.—Sir Oliver had forced on me certain rations of cold pork for supper.—I fell asleep, and dreamt of the devil and Mrs. Morgan.—

At length

“The morn, in russet mantle clad,
Peep’d o’er the top of” our “high eastern hill.”

After a breakfast which appeared to me to be unusually protracted, I retired with my mother to her dressing-room, there to receive from her

a communication of those weighty motives which had induced her to summon me thus abruptly. I learned that her so doing was the consequence of a letter which she had lately received from a paternal uncle of mine, of whom I had hitherto heard but little, and seen nothing, General Lord Viscount Manningham, the elder, and now the sole surviving brother of my lamented father.

This epistle stated the fact of his lordship's arrival in England, after an absence from his native land of many years' duration, in the course of which time his paternal affections had been severely lacerated, by witnessing a fine and dearly-loved family of promising children yielding, together with their mother, one by one, to the fatal effects of a climate but too uncongenial with a European constitution. Of three boys, and as many girls, one only of the latter now remained to him; and, trembling lest the same dreadful cause which had robbed him in succession of her brothers and sisters, should also deprive him of this, now become his only hope, Lord Manningham had relinquished the high and lucrative situation, and the state,

little short of regal, which he held in one of our richest colonies, to seek once more the shores of his own country, loaded, 'tis true, with wealth, but all too dearly purchased by the loss of his wife and offspring.

Great indeed were the changes which the gallant Viscount found had taken place during his long absence from England. His two brothers were, both of them, no more ; of all his once numerous relatives and connexions my mother and myself were the solitary survivors, neither of whom he had, of course, ever beheld. His attachment to his brothers, and to Charles especially, had been a strong one ; and although the confined state of his own finances, which in the earlier part of his career were altogether unequal to the decent support of his rank, had prevented his doing for him what his affection dictated, and indeed forced him to sacrifice all his early habits and attachments for the valuable appointment which eventually crowned him with wealth as well as honour, still he ever entertained the kindest feelings towards his youngest brother, and, as far as lay in his

power, had aided his promotion by the exercise of all the interest he possessed ; fully determining, at the same time, to appropriate to his use no niggard portion of that daily increasing property which the gradual contraction of his own family circle rendered the less necessary for his and their exclusive use.

Death, as we have already seen, had frustrated this project ; and Colonel Stafford expired, comparatively ignorant of his fraternal intentions ; but now that the same cruel spoiler had robbed him also of those beloved boys to whom he had once looked up as destined to transmit his name and honours to posterity, Lord Manningham recurred with greater warmth than ever to his original design, and, as the father was beyond the reach of his benevolence, resolved to confer his benefits on the son. In this intention he was the more confirmed, as that son was now, by the failure of his own issue-male, become heir-presumptive to the family title, and the last possessor of the noble name of Stafford.

Such was the tenor of his epistle, which con-

cluded with the expression of an earnest desire to see him who was destined to inherit his honours, and intimated that the character he had already heard of his nephew,—my mother read me this part of the letter with a swelling heart,—in reply to the inquiries which he had instituted respecting him, made him anxious that the meeting should take place as soon as possible.

The letter, which, I need hardly say, was a very long one, and couched in the handsomest and most affectionate terms, contained also a pressing invitation to my mother, urging her to accompany her son to Grosvenor Square, as his engagements with Ministers would, for a time, render it impossible for the Ex-Governor himself to visit the Hall; a hint, too, was conveyed of an embryo plan, the object of which was the union of the senior and junior branches of the House of Stafford, by the marriage of the two last remaining scions of the family.

Of all the proposals that could have been submitted to her, it is doubtful if any one could have been recommended of a nature more gratifying to my mother than the one thus alluded

to. Lord Manningham's wealth was now immense, and, being almost entirely of his own acquisition, was, of course, with the exception of the very small entailed estate which went with the Viscountcy, completely at his own disposal. To me, indeed, a barren title would descend ; but that, without the funds necessary to support its dignity, might rather be considered as a misfortune than a boon. An arrangement like the one proposed would obviate every inconvenience. Report spoke highly of the person and accomplishments of the Honourable Miss Stafford, although (from her father's time having been hitherto too much occupied since his return to admit of his forming a suitable establishment,) she had not yet been introduced into general society, but at the next birthday she was to be presented ; then, of course, her career of fashion would commence, and, beyond all doubt, numberless admirers among the votaries of *ton* would rapidly present themselves in the train of the possessor of so many charms, and the inheretrix of so many rupees. On every account therefore my

mother was anxious that I should lose no time in securing to myself an interest both with my noble uncle and his fair daughter ; and nothing prevented her from at once writing to me, and explaining the whole affair, but the idea which she entertained that she could better expatiate upon the advantages of such a match in a personal interview, combined with a wish of hearing from my own lips the pleasing assurance that my most earnest endeavours should be forthwith applied to the realization of this her most fondly cherished hope.

Although naturally of a sanguine temperament, and fully alive to all the advantages which rank and property bestow on their possessor, there was nevertheless a something in all this which did not present itself to my view in quite such glowing colours as it did to that of my mother. To be thus unceremoniously disposed of, without being even consulted on the subject, appeared to me neither consistent with the respect I thought my due, nor altogether reasonable. Miss Stafford might, for aught I knew to the contrary, be all that my

mother represented her to be, but then again — she might *not* — or, if she were, I might not like her, or — though self-love whispered that was scarcely possible — she *might* not like me. Nor should I be acting with candour were I to deny that, had this proposal been made to me before I quitted Oxford, it *might* have been viewed in a very different light. At present the charms of the unknown fair one certainly tended most materially to bias my inclinations; and though I was not so far gone, either in love or in romance, as at once to resolve on rejecting so fair an offer, — if offer that might be called, which at most was only an insinuation, — still the recollection of the tender yet modest glances I had encountered in the pit of Covent Garden theatre undoubtedly contributed to render me averse from a proposal, my acceptance of which would of course preclude the possibility of any further acquaintance with the object of my search, even should I be fortunate enough to discover her retreat. Nevertheless I could not help feeling the force of Sir Anthony Absolute's

observation, "it is very unreasonable to object to a lady whom you have never seen;" and the idea at the same moment occurring to me that my attendance on Lord Manningham in town would be, perhaps, the most efficacious method I could take to make the discovery that lay so near my heart, I gave my assent to the proposal that I should pay my uncle a visit, not only without reluctance, but even with an alacrity, to which an unwillingness to occasion so much pain to my mother as I saw the expression of my real feelings on the subject would give her, mainly contributed.

A sort of coxcombical feeling that perhaps after all I *might* like a young lady—who, it was ten to one, might not like me, aided in deciding the matter, and I "gave in my adhesion" with a tolerably decent share of apparent resignation. My mother, however, was not so blind as to be insensible to my indifference on a subject which she had fondly flattered herself would have elicited far more vivid emotions; still, as I expressed no disinclination to the measure, remonstrance was impossible,

and she contented herself with re-stating, in the most persuasive language of which she was mistress, the various and incalculable advantages attending the connexion. Her endeavours were not wholly unsuccessful; and after a day principally spent in reflection upon all the *pros* and *cons* of the business, I went to repose with a resolution of confirming my willingness to avail myself immediately of his Lordship's invitation, trusting to Providence and to events as they might arise, to enable me either to accept or decline the honour intended me. This I signified to my mother before I retired for the night, in such terms as again caused the beam of satisfaction and joy to sparkle in her eye. On the following day I again pursued my way towards that great emporium of the wealth of the universe, which, as I firmly believed, contained, among its other treasures, the paragon of her sex.—Remember, reader, I was then not twenty-two.—

The weather on this occasion was still more boisterous and unpleasant than on the day of

my journey into the country, but I neither marked its state nor felt the inconvenience of it. The road, the prospects, the very post-boys were all charming; and, but that they were rather slow, the horses themselves would have had the benefit of that complacency with which I was now disposed to regard all nature, animate and inanimate — except Mrs. Morgan.

My mother had provided me with an introductory letter to Lord Manningham, expressing the satisfaction she had experienced at finding the sole surviving brother of her lamented Charles thus disposed to countenance and support his widow and only child, while she deeply regretted that the state of her own health was such as to render so long a journey imprudent, not to say impossible, on her part. Of me, her son, she spoke in the fondest terms maternal affection could dictate, and conjured him by the love which, as his letter evinced, he had borne the father, to extend that love to the son. She added her eager coincidence in his half-expressed wish, and her anxious hope

that his Lordship would pay her a visit, at Underdown Hall, at the earliest opportunity which his engagements would afford him.

A civil postscript from Sir Oliver, backing the latter request, completed this momentous despatch, which was delivered into my safe keeping, sealed, in due form, with a fine impression of the Bullwinkle arms, affixed by the Baronet himself, in a circle of sealing-wax the size of a crown-piece.

CHAPTER VIII.

Assist me, chaste Dian, the Nymph to regain,
More fleet than the roc-buck, and wing'd with disdain;
The faster I follow the faster she flies,
Though Daphne's pursued 'tis Myrtillo that dies.

Duetto Affettuoso.

NO NEWS NOT ALWAYS GOOD NEWS.—TWO HEADS NOT
ALWAYS BETTER THAN ONE.—A SEARCH.—A DISAPPOINT-
MENT.—OFF SHE GOES.—TALLYHO!—A CHASE.—A DOUBLE.
—FAIRLY THROWN OUT.

It was late in the afternoon when I reached London; but no sooner had I deposited my baggage safely in my old quarters, than I ran, without even changing my dress, or taking any refreshment, to Jermyn Street.

My old friend Sally opened the door as usual, but her countenance at once told me that she had nothing to communicate. "Neither of the

ladies had called since I was there last," and of course she had as yet had no opportunity of earning the stipulated reward; but "she did not despair."—Nor did I, though I could not help feeling sorely disappointed.

Foiled once more, I returned to the hotel, and, having seated myself in the coffee-room, was slowly pulling to pieces and devouring the solitary muffin that accompanied my cup of coffee, with all the vacant deliberation of mental as well as corporeal lassitude, when a sudden slap on the shoulder induced me to raise my eyes, which immediately encountered an oblique glance from those of my Cousin Nicholas.

I know not whether I have before remarked that my young relative, among his other accomplishments, possessed that of squinting in its most perfect fashion;—looking me, therefore, full in the face, while an ordinary observer would have believed one of his eyes to be directed to the opposite side of the room, and its fellow to the muffineer in my hand.—

"Charles!" quoth he, "is it possible?—I thought you had long ere this been at Under-

down! What!—been snug in town all the while!—eh, old Sobersides!—Ferretting out some wench for a hundred!—The little gipsy we picked up at the playhouse, eh?”

A very respectable portion of the best blood in my veins rushed into my face, as I indignantly repelled this injurious supposition, assuring my Cousin, in tones of greater asperity than usual, that, so far from having been lying *pards* in London, or engaged in any unworthy pursuit, I had actually been down to his father's, and was indeed but just returned to town.

“Well, well, no great harm done, cousin Charles,—had my guess been a true one, you might, perhaps, have been worse employed.—But how goes it with old Squaretoes, and that dainty piece of dimity, Miss Kitty Pyefinch?—Curse her nankeen countenance! I thought she would have kissed me when I left home, whether I would or not —”

“Nicholas,” said I, “Sir Oliver is as well as I have ever known him to be, together with all his friends, disrespectfully as you may choose

to allude to some of them ;—but come, let me question you in my turn :—have you found out—that is—have you ever met again with those ladies whom we saw that evening at the Oratorio, and followed to Jermyn Street ?”

“ Not I—that is—not to speak to them. I fell in with the young tit indeed yesterday, walking with her bumpkin brother, but I cut them dead—Miss is too die-away for me.—The old girl would be a better speculation by half, if she were not so deuced crummy.”

“ But where, my dear Nicholas—where did you meet with that charming—I mean, the girl you speak of ?”

“ Oh, in the Strand, yesterday morning, and I dare say she visits some people in that elegant neighbourhood, for I saw her go into a house in one of the streets leading from it down towards the river.”

“ Which street, my dear Nicholas ?”

“ No, not Wych Street ; one of those on the other side of the way ;—I do not know that I can tell you the name of it ; but, as you seem so anxious about the business, I dare say

I could point it out to you, — and the house too, for that matter, — to-morrow.”

“Anxious?—no, not at all!—But, seriously, my good fellow, you will lay me under an essential obligation if you can show me the house, as the lady left something in my possession that evening which, as a gentleman, I of course wish to return.”

“Why not go to her own house, then, at once, where we saw her go in with her mother and Master Sappy, after the music?”

“Why, to tell you the truth, Nicholas, I have already called there, and find that is not her residence, but merely the abode of one of her friends.”

“Well, cousin Charles, I will help you, as far as I can, with all my heart. But why so close, man?—Why not say at once that you have taken a fancy to the girl, and want to beat up her quarters?”

It was with no small difficulty that I could command my temper sufficiently to listen to my Cousin’s sarcastic innuendoes, which, through the fear of losing what information he might

be able to give me, I dared not openly resent. He saw his power, and used it most unmercifully, tantalizing and tormenting me all the evening, in the course of which he managed to draw from me the reasons of my so sudden return to town, and my intended intercourse with Lord Manningham's family. At length he quitted me for the night, with a promise of accompanying me early the next morning in pursuit of my lovely fugitive, leaving me, however, still half in doubt whether he had not been all along playing upon my credulity, and whether the whole story of the rencontre in the Strand was not a pure fiction of his own inventing.

Never did night appear so long as that which intervened between this evening of my return and the following morning, which, as I fondly hoped, was destined to crown my wishes with success. I sprang from my bed as soon as the various sounds from below gave notice that the business of the day was commencing; and, having roused my cousin Nicholas, who slept in an adjoining chamber, made a hasty toilet,

and wandered up and down the empty coffee-room till he should join me at breakfast, which I ordered immediately, in anticipation of his instant appearance.

Twenty times had I compared the watch in my hand with the dial in the room,—twenty times had I turned with eagerness to the door, through which Nicholas did *not* enter,—and full as often had I taken up, and laid down again, the Morning Herald, of which I found it impossible at present to read six consecutive lines.—Still he came not.

At last, losing all patience, I once more flew up the stairs that led to his chamber, with strides that would not have disgraced an ogre; I burst into his room, and found him—fast asleep, as he was when I had called him an hour and twelve minutes before.—Human nature could not endure this; so, turning down the bed-clothes, and laying violent hands upon the ewer, I threatened him with a discipline similar to that inflicted on the unlucky pick-pocket, unless he immediately took the necessary measures for accompanying me down

stairs. This Mr. Bullwinkle once more solemnly promised to do ; but I was no longer in that state of patient acquiescence which would have enabled me to rest satisfied with his plighted faith. I therefore stationed myself obstinately by his bedside, till the great work of adorning and embellishing his person was completed, an operation which I could not at times help suspecting he took a malicious pleasure in protracting to the latest possible period.

In spite of all his delays, necessary and unnecessary, my Cousin Nicholas was at length accoutred ; and, after a breakfast which he seemed to me to be an age in devouring, we started off, arm in arm together, towards the Strand. But here the demon of disappointment still pursued me ; Nicholas either could not, or would not, point out the precise street in which he had seen the object of my search ; and after leading me in vain up and down every street and lane between Temple Bar and Charing Cross, provokingly asserting as he entered each, that he "was sure he was right at last,"—a prediction, the fallacy of which was proved

the succeeding moment,—he at length fairly confessed that “his recollection had certainly failed him for once, and that he really could not now tell which was the identical street in question,—though he was perfectly sure it must be one of them.”

“Hope deferred,” saith the Wise Man, “maketh the heart sick;” and, completely overcome with that uncomfortable sensation, I made but little resistance to the proposal he now made, that we should adjourn for a while to the nearest coffee-house, and recruit. Many of my readers will recollect one, of a third-rate description, called the Hungerford, long since swept from the face of the earth by the innovating hand of time, but which, at the period of which I am speaking, stood on the north side of the Strand, and nearly faced the market of the same name, which still exists, and retains its appellation; *sed quantum mutatus ab illo!*—Into this asylum did I betake myself, weary and dispirited both in mind and body, and seated myself opposite to my companion, in one of the boxes near the window.

My cousin Nicholas called for a "basin of mock turtle," and I was persuaded to order another, rather with the view of keeping him in countenance, (though I must confess I do not recollect having ever seen him *out* of countenance,) and of whiling away the time till his satiated appetite should enable him to renew the search, than from any inclination on my part to eat. The "*two mocks* for number three" were at length despatched, and I was settling with the slipshod waiter who had brought them,—for my Cousin, as usual, "had no silver,"—when an exclamation from the latter at once took away all my attention.

"There she goes, by G—!" said Nicholas.

"Who?—where?" cried I, turning instantly to the window, and throwing the waiter who had just delivered me the change for a five pound note, twice as much as he demanded.—"As I live and breathe," quoth Nicholas, "she is in that green chariot yonder;" and as he spoke he made for the door.

I gave but one look down the street, saw a showy-looking equipage proceeding at a brisk

pace, and instantly turning, scarce gave myself time to thrust the "flimsies," as Nicholas called the one-pound notes, into my pocket-book that lay on the table, ere I sprang after him.—My Cousin was already in the street.

With a degree of rapidity worthy of notice in the annals of pedestrianism, we made our way along that crowded thoroughfare; the "green chariot" was still in view, and we were fast gaining upon it, when, in crossing what was then the end of St. Martin's Lane, I experienced the truth of that homely but respectable proverb, "The more haste the less speed;" I stumbled and fell.—It was but the delay of a moment; I was instantly on my legs again, and followed the direction which my Cousin declared the chariot had taken, but it was no longer in sight, and we had reached the Opera-House, in breathless precipitation, ere my companion stopped short, and observed, "he was afraid he must have been mistaken after all, and that the carriage had turned down towards Parliament Street."

It was but too true;—we had indeed, in the

sportsman's phrase, "overridden the hounds;" and I was cursing the ill luck that seemed to delight in persecuting me, when a transient glimpse of Nicholas's face for the first time induced a suspicion of his sincerity.—There was in the expression of his countenance a something which conveyed at once to my mind a strong idea, that he had purposely misled me; though wherefore, it was impossible for me to conjecture.

"Bullwinkle!" said I, stopping short, and fixing my eyes upon him, "you are deceiving me. They came not this way, and you know it——"

"Upon my life, I fear so," returned he, in an unembarrassed tone, while his villanous obliquity of vision defied the inquisitorial glance I endeavoured to fix upon his eyes;—"I really think we must be wrong," he continued; "but no matter; a girl like her is easily unkenneled, if a man sets about the search in earnest;—come, come, Stafford, give up the chase for to-day, man. You have plenty of time before you, and a few of the *mopusses*, properly administered, will

soon ferret her out, I warrant you; or, at all events, they will find you another as good.—I should like nothing better than to stay and lend you a helping hand, for this sort of adventure is rather in my way; but,

“Stern Necessity’s severe decree
No more permits the willing choice to me!”

as Kitty Pyefinch says.—I must be off to Oxford again to-morrow, for I have been *ill* there so long, that, by Jove, they may take it into their infernally compassionate heads to look in and see whether I am alive or not;—so come, a dish of fish, a cutlet, and one bottle of Burgundy to wash it down, and then I leave you to discover and arrange matters, if you can, with this invisible insensible whom you have never seen but once, and prosecute your embryo amour with the delectable cousin whom you have never seen at all.—For me, I am off once more *inter syloas academi querere verum*.”

His open, unembarrassed manner staggered, if it did not entirely remove, my suspicions. I was already fatigued with walking the whole of the day, and accompanied him, therefore, the

more readily to the Bedford, resolving to renew my search the next morning, and to leave no stone unturned to accomplish a discovery which, the more that obstacles were thrown in its way, I seemed the more eagerly to desire.

CHAPTER IX.

If I be I, as I suppose I be,
I've got a little dog at home, and he knows me :
If I be I, he will wag his little tail,
But if I be not I, he will then bark and rail.

LITTLE WOMAN.

MORE MYSTERY.—AN ARRIVAL.—AN AGREEABLE RENCONTRE.
—ANOTHER NOT SO AGREEABLE.—SEEING IS NOT ALWAYS
BELIEVING.—A “HOW.”—WESTWARD HO!—LONG LOOK'D
FOR, FOUND AT LAST.

On rising the following morning I found that Nicholas had for once kept faith ; he had already started for Oxford, nor was I at all sorry for the circumstance. Indeed, I could not fail to call to mind the notorious propensity to mischief which he had displayed from a boy

—a propensity which, instead of wearing out and disappearing as he advanced in years, had, as I well knew,

“Grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength.”

The more I considered his conduct during the preceding day, the more I became convinced that I had been his dupe throughout; and that at the very moment when he seemed to be most earnest in assisting my inquiries, he was in reality laughing at me in his sleeve, and enjoying my perplexity and disappointment. His absence, therefore, I felt as a positive relief, rather than as an inconvenience, and I accordingly prepared to renew my researches by myself, deriving added confidence from the want of that very auxiliary on whom I had, only the day before, placed so much dependence. But before I again set out on my Quixotic expedition, busy memory interfered most officiously, and brought to my view, in very prominent colours, the ostensible purpose for which I had returned to London, the plighted promise I had

given to my mother, that I would forthwith seek out my noble uncle and his fair daughter.

Mrs. Stafford would, I knew, be exceedingly anxious to hear of my arrival and domestication in Lord Manningham's family. One day's delay might, fairly enough, be attributed to fatigue, &c.; but a second would hardly admit of such, or indeed of any, excuse. I, therefore, though not without a feeling of reluctance almost amounting to aversion, determined to go and present my letter of introduction to the "Honourable Amelia Stafford," and her lordly papa. But here I soon found I was reckoning without my host;—the epistle so carefully indited by my mother, so much more carefully sealed and superscribed by Sir Oliver, and most carefully, as I imagined, deposited by myself within the voluminous folds of a patent pocket-book—was nowhere to be found.

In vain did I ransack the contents of the aforesaid pocket-book, in which I could have ventured to swear I had placed it with my own hand, and whence nothing but the fact of the

book's never having been for one moment out of my possession since my departure from Underdown, could prevent my believing it to have been abstracted.—In vain did I, as it were, eviscerate every fold and every pocket—the letter had totally disappeared.

After a long-continued but fruitless search, I was endeavouring to recollect whether I might not, after all, in the hurry of my return, have left this fateful billet on my dressing-table at the Hall, when the conviction at once struck me that I had, immediately on receiving it from my mother, placed it directly in my pocket-book, together with two others, one from Sir Oliver to his man of business, and one from Miss Kitty Pyefinch,—“favoured by C. Stafford, Esq.”—to a milliner in Barbican, with whom she had some time before scraped an acquaintance at a watering-place, and had since regularly corresponded, once at least in every year, on the subject of the newest fashions. This last-named and most precious charge I had, immediately on my arrival in London, consigned to the vortex of the two-penny post, and now I began to

tremble, lest, inadvertently, I might have committed the missing epistle to the same receptacle ; but this, I soon perceived, could not have been the case, as, on a re-examination, I not only found my uncle's letter to his agent, but also another in the closest juxta-position to it, evidently usurping the place of the deficient billet. This was a supernumerary of which I had no recollection, and was addressed to " James Arbuthnot, Esq., British Coffee-house, Cockspur-Street."

Who on earth Mr. James Arbuthnot could possibly be, or how a letter directed to him could find its way into my pocket, was to me as absolute a mystery as the quadrature of the circle, the determination of the longitude, or the discovery of the philosopher's stone.—There, however, it was,—and, as the seal was already broken, I felt little compunction in intruding upon the privacy of a gentleman who had some how or other contrived, most unwittingly on my side, to make me a party to his correspondence.

The contents of the letter were as follow :—

"SIR,—I vas to meet you at de Tennis Court on Vensday, as you tell me, about that leetle annuity, bote you vas not come. The business can't be done all so cheap as vat I thought ; bote if the gentlemans vas abofe seventy, den I can get my frend to do de *post obit* at twenty-six.

"Yours most obediently,

"AARON XIMENES.

"P. S. — The premiums will only be six and a half."

Never did response, written or unwritten, from the Pythian Tripod, or any other oracle of antiquity, exercise the wits of curious inquirer more than did this mystic scroll puzzle and perplex my wondering faculties. Difficult as it was to decipher the hieroglyphics themselves, their purport, and, above all, the mode in which they could have insinuated themselves into their present situation, was still more mysterious. The more I racked my brain to account for it, the more bewildered I became. One thing, however, was certain, and, when I came to

reflect more coolly upon the matter, I was not altogether sorry for it. The letter to Lord Manningham was undoubtedly lost, and I therefore hesitated not to avail myself of this circumstance to defer my visit to Grosvenor-Square, contenting myself with writing to my mother, informing her of the occurrence, and requesting that she would cause my room at the Hall to be examined for the missing epistle, and that, in the event of its not being forthcoming, that she would furnish me with a new set of credentials. The time which must necessarily intervene I determined to employ in a renewed and energetic pursuit after my incognita.

I did not in the mean time forget to make inquiries in Cockspur Street after "James Arbuthnot, Esq." A gentleman of that name had, as I was told, occasionally slept there, and letters were sometimes left at the bar for him ; but he had not been there lately, nor did they recollect that any letter whatever had been taken in for him for some time. With this information, meagre and unsatisfactory as it was, I was obliged for the present to remain

contented. My mornings were passed in parading the streets, my evenings in visiting various places of amusement, in the vain hope of once more encountering the idol of my imagination. The day passed by on which I might have received an answer from my mother, but it came not, and I rejoiced in the delay. On the fifth evening, I was sitting, as usual, after a long and useless peregrination, execrating my unlucky stars, and revolving a thousand plans, each more visionary than the last, for the attainment of my object, when Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, in his own proper person, entered the coffee-room.

Had the spectre of the revered Sir Roger risen from the superincumbent dust of ages, in all his Norman panoply, and presented himself before me, refulgent in chain mail, I could scarcely have received the visitation with a more theatric start.

That any circumstance at all short of an earthquake, or the stoppage of a country-bank, could have possessed sufficient interest to draw good baronet thirty miles from home, I

could never have conceived — but to the metropolis! — to that scene of villany, fraud, and ignorance! — ay, of ignorance, for “what can people know, that is worth knowing, who never go a-hunting above once a-year, and then only on an Easter Tuesday in a hackney-coach!” — This had frequently formed a favourite theme of discourse for my uncle on a winter’s evening, at Underdown Hall, especially after the news contained in some recent missive from Miss Kitty’s city correspondent had been duly detailed and commented upon by that erudite fair. Much then did I marvel at seeing the baronet, despite the sovereign contempt he ever felt and expressed for them, thus mixing with the “ignoramuses” of London; and not a little did I speculate upon the magnitude of that cause which could operate to the voluntary introduction of his person among so barbarous a race.

But the half ironical smile which had begun to contract the corners of my mouth expanded at once into an expression of the most unfeigned gratitude, when I found that the

moral convulsion which had divorced the kind soul from his Household Gods, and plunged him thus headlong into scenes which he abominated, was neither more nor less than the anxiety which he felt for the welfare of my unworthy self. The receipt of my letter had caused much consternation at the Hall; that from my mother to Lord Manningham could nowhere be found in the places which I had desired might be searched; and my affectionate parent had determined, after a long and fruitless inquiry on the subject, on recommencing her task, when, to the utter surprise of herself and everybody else, Sir Oliver suddenly announced his resolution of being the bearer of it.

“The boy,” he said, “was clearly not able to make his way in town like a man—every one might have seen, too, when he was last down at the Hall, that his wits were *gone wool-gathering*—and he would go and see him well through the business himself.” It is needless to say that his offer was accepted with the liveliest gratitude by a mother anxious for the well-being of her child, though more than a

doubt would sometimes cross her mind, if her brother's personal interference could, in the present case at least, contribute to it ; but the good-humoured eagerness to be of service to me which he displayed, and the vehement invectives he launched forth against the villany and temptations of London in the abstract, (of which in the detail he had about as much knowledge and experience as a child of four years old, or a native of Timbuctoo,) made Mrs. Stafford contented, nay, even anxious that he should set out forthwith to cover me with his protecting ægis, and ward off the dangers with which the loss of so valuable an article as a letter of introduction declared me necessarily to be surrounded.—My poor Uncle was about as well fitted for the task of guiding a youth through the labyrinthian ways of London, as of being Mufti to the Sublime Porte ; but he thought otherwise, and his motives were the kindest and most affectionate.—Peace be with his ashes !

With much circumlocution, and an air of fatherly protection,—to me, who knew the wor-

thy baronet's habits so well, irresistibly ludicrous, — he communicated his intentions in coming to London, and, felicitating both me and himself most warmly on his having so readily met with me, expressed his determination of taking a quiet pipe and a tankard, as he had dined upon the road, and of postponing matters of business until the morrow.

There was much, however, in this arrangement of Sir Oliver's objectionable, not to say impracticable. In the first place, not even a cigar (to say nothing of tobacco-pipes) was allowed in the room, nor was "a tankard" much more accessible; besides, the social "dish of chat" with me, which he seemed to consider an appendage of course, would have interfered very materially with the plan I had already chalked out for the evening. Notwithstanding my numerous disappointments, hope had not yet entirely forsaken me; and I had fully resolved on visiting one, at least, of the theatres, as usual, in the faint expectation of being able to recover among the audience some trace of the beautiful phantom which had hitherto eluded

me. I had nothing for it, therefore, but to state plainly to Sir Oliver the impossibility of his gratifying himself at present in the manner proposed, and to solicit his joining me in a cup of coffee, and subsequent adjournment to Drury Lane; after which I pledged myself to accompany him to a place where, amidst less sophisticated souls, he might solace himself to satiety with his favourite beverage and amusement. With much the same sort of surly acquiescence as that with which a traveller surrenders to a footpad the purse he has no means of withholding, Sir Oliver, finding me positive, gave a grumbling assent, and to Drury Lane we proceeded.

Many years had elapsed since the baronet had visited the interior of a London theatre, and the brilliancy of the lights, the elegance of the house, the beauty of the scenery and decorations, together with the business of the stage, had an effect almost bewildering upon his faculties. Mine, too, were scarcely more at liberty, since, in hearing and replying to his various remarks and multifarious questions, my

own senses were so completely occupied as to leave a person less interested than myself little leisure or opportunity for the scrutiny which was my real inducement to attend the performance. By degrees, indeed, in listening to and answering Sir Oliver's very *original* observations, the main purpose of my coming had almost faded from my memory, when it was at once most forcibly brought to my recollection by an apparition in an opposite box, which acted upon me with the effect of a galvanic battery.—This was the gaunt figure of the ever-to-be-abominated Mrs. Morgan, seated in close confabulation with the supposed mamma of my unknown charmer, in a front row on the second tier.

Not a little to the astonishment, and the very visible dismay, of Sir Oliver, I cut him hastily short in an elaborate harangue on the wonderful properties of gas, and the ingenuity of its, then recent, introduction into our national theatres, and briefly telling him that I had just caught sight of a college acquaintance, in an opposite box, whom I particularly wished to

speaking to, begged his excuse for a few minutes, while I should make to my friend a communication of some consequence; then, pledging myself to rejoin him in a quarter of an hour at farthest, I gave him no time to utter the objection I saw already hovering on his lips, but bowed and left him, running, with all the eagerness of a boy after a butterfly, towards the place which contained the object of my pursuit.

Never did weary palmer, after a long and laborious pilgrimage, enter the shrine of his patron Saint with more of satisfaction, awe, and reverence, than filled my palpitating bosom, as I seated myself behind Mrs. Morgan and her friend. — A significant glance passed between them as I entered, and, with a voice faltering from emotion, paid my compliments to both. My reception from either party was sufficiently cool to have rebuffed any one who had less imperious motives for cultivating an acquaintance. Their replies to my remarks, and congratulations upon their good looks, were cold, constrained, and barely within the bounds of

civility ; while the sarcastic expression of Mrs. Morgan's eye, when I at last hazarded an inquiry to her companion after the health of "the young lady whom I had once had the happiness of seeing in her company," showed me at once that the motives of my attentions were, by her at least, duly appreciated.

I failed not also to perceive that this question put the good lady to whom it was addressed into no small flutter ; she fumed and fidgeted, and appeared so uneasy during every allusion I made to the subject of our former meeting, and evaded giving me any direct answer so very inartificially, that I no longer imagined, what I had never indeed entirely believed, that any maternal ties, at all events, existed between her and my charmer ; I felt convinced, on the contrary, that a secret of some kind or other, and evidently one very burdensome in the keeping, prevented her from giving me all the information I required. I employed all the address I was master of to overcome their undisguised dislike to my society, and by my perseverance had at length so far succeeded

in thawing the ice, even of the frosty-faced Morgan, as to induce her to reply to my remarks in a tone which might almost have been considered as approaching to civility ; I had begun to flatter myself that I should obtain by saps what had defied my efforts at storming — I had actually gained so much as to discover that the name of my friend on the left hand was Wilkinson, and that she filled the important situation of housekeeper in a family of rank at the “ West End of the Town ” — when a bustle in the box which I had quitted forcibly drew off my attention. A momentary glance was sufficient to satisfy me that the principal actor in the disturbance was Sir Oliver Bullwinkle.

That he was engaged in a serious dispute with some one, the vehemence of the good Baronet’s gesticulation would not allow me to doubt, while now and then an upper note of his, audible in preponderating shrillness, above all the forcible recommendations to “ Turn ’em out ! ” and “ Throw ’em over ! ” — generally applied on such occasions by the denizens of the upper regions, in the forlorn hope of transferring objects

of annoyance from themselves to their friends below,—confirmed the fact. The person of the antagonist who appeared to have drawn down upon himself such a torrent of wrath and vituperation from the exasperated Baronet, was concealed from my view by the intervening bystanders, some of whom seemed, by their gestures, inclined to take an active part in the fray. Every feeling of my mind naturally revolted against seeing my Uncle, although, as I knew, “himself a host,” thus matched single-handed against such apparently fearful odds, and I hastened to his assistance, first apologizing to my new friends for my abruptness in quitting them, and begging permission to return and escort them home at the conclusion of the performance.

Whether my very polite offer met with acceptance or denial, I am unable to say, as at that moment I fancied I saw Sir Oliver’s arm raised in the act of striking, and, without waiting to distinguish the answer, I closed the box-door, and ran off.

On arriving at the supposed scene of combat, I found I was just too late for the fray: my

uncle's opponent, having been carried off by a friend just as the dispute had reached its climax, was already descending one of the staircases that led to the lobbies. I saw nothing of his person, save that a casual glance showed me a figure wrapped up in a light-coloured riding-coat, while some broken exclamations, uttered either by himself or his companion, respecting the "old fellow's infernal impudence," were alone distinguishable.

A considerable degree of confusion still prevailed within the box, and, as Sir Oliver's safety was my first object, to that point I of course directed my attention. I found the Baronet, with a face as red as a peony, fuming and perspiring at every pore, while, with all the vehemence of a Methodist preacher at a country wake, he was alternately remonstrating and insisting on his right to chastise some one who appeared to have incurred the heaviest weight of his displeasure, and this to the great amusement of a portion of his audience, and the marked indignation of others.—As his eye fell upon me, he changed the object of his attack.

"So, sir, here you are at last! This is your ten minutes, is it? Why were you not here, sir, to have broken that puppy's neck?"

"Be calm, my dear Sir Oliver, let me beg you to be calm; consider where you are, and—"

"Consider the d—I, sir.—Calm! I will never be calm again.—I have a right to be in a passion, and I will. Abuse me like a pickpocket! —threaten to pull my nose — a Bullwinkle's nose! — I'll massacre the rascal, I'll ——"

"My dear uncle, pray let me persuade you to withdraw; your antagonist is gone already: in a fitter place we can talk this matter over, and if any one has insulted you ——"

"Insulted me! — didn't I tell you he swore he would pull my nose! — threatened to horse-whip me!"

"Well, well, uncle, pray let us retire; this person, whoever he may be, is undoubtedly to be found, and doubt not but I shall be ready ——"

"You be ready! — you be d—! — Found! What, I suppose you too mean to join in the

plot to persuade me out of my senses — you too mean to confederate with that imp of the devil's begetting, Nicholas, to drive me mad !”

“ Indeed, Sir, I do not ; I know nothing of my Cousin's plans, nor do I see how he can be at all concerned in the present business, as he is now at Oxford.”

“ It 's a lie — it 's an infernal lie — the scoundrel ! — it was Nick, and I 'll swear it.—But I 'll work the dog ! — D— him ! I 'll disinherit him—I 'll not leave him so much land as would fill a flower-pot — a rascal ! horsewhip me ! pull my nose ! ”

I was thunderstruck ! My Cousin Nicholas then was the object of all this excess of indignation — but it was impossible — Nicholas, with all his addiction to mischief, could never have gone such lengths as Sir Oliver spoke of ; besides, I was morally certain that he had now been at Oxford more than a week. At all events the point to be gained at present was to get my uncle away ; and this, partly through the assistance of Sir John Allanby, a college

friend who had once accompanied me on a visit to the Hall, and who at this period joined me, I at length succeeded in accomplishing.

We adjourned to the New Hummums, Sir Oliver absolutely foaming with rage, like a fresh-drawn bottle of his favourite Edinburgh ale in the dog-days. He was, indeed, "*completely up.*" Having obtained a private room, and ordered some refreshment, I allowed my Uncle's fury some time to evaporate in, before I hazarded a question as to the origin of his discomposure. After a slight repast, at which the Baronet, in spite of his anger, played his part to admiration, a plentiful supply of his favourite beverage soothed him into some degree of returning mansuetude, till the ebullition of his fury at length "in hollow murmurs died away."

Then, and not till then, did I venture a query as to the particulars of his adventure, and learned, amidst many interruptions, occasioned by his oft rekindling ire, that I had not quitted his side five minutes before a person in a drab riding-frock entered the box, whom Sir Oliver, notwithstanding his dress, which was cut in the

very extreme of the fashion, his dark mustaches and military spurs, at once recognised as his own son.

“Nick!” cried Sir Oliver in amaze, “Nick,—can I believe my eyes!—What the d—l are you doing here, Sir, when I believed you to be hard at your studies?—Nick, I say, come back directly, you rascal, and answer me?”

The gentleman whom he addressed, having merely cast a cursory glance round the theatre, was retiring, when the latter part of the Baronet’s speech caught his attention;—for an instant he paused, half turning to a friend who leaned upon his arm, as if under the impression that the words must have been directed to him, but seeing no indication in his countenance of that having been the case, he once more faced about, and asked, in a tone of astonishment, “Did you address yourself to me, sir?”

“To you, sir? ay, to be sure—whom else do you think I spoke to? I tell you what, Nick—”

“Really, sir, you have the advantage of me,” interrupted the other; “I do not recollect that

I have ever had the honour of your acquaintance."

"Why, you impertinent puppy!" thundered Sir Oliver, lost in amaze at what he conceived to be the unparalleled impudence of his own offspring,—“do you mean to deny me? Do you mean to tell me to my face that you are not my son, Nicholas Bullwinkle?”

“Upon my word, sir, I lament to say that I am not fortunate enough to possess so mild and engaging a papa,” returned his antagonist, whose surprise at this attack seemed now to be fast merging in the amusement he began to derive from it; “and I much fear,” added he, “that even if I were inclined to admit your claim to paternity, and to solicit your blessing in the hope of soon enjoying a thumping legacy, my mamma would by no means be disposed to sanction your pretensions, being, as she is, already provided with a respectable elderly gentleman, whom she has long since honoured with the title of Lord and Master, and complimented as the author of my being.—Eh? Sybthorpe, what think you?”

"Ho! ho! ho! Famous, Tommy, 'pon honour!" shouted Mr. Sybthorpe.

Horace has with great truth, as well as shrewdness, observed, that

*"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus ;"*

and my Uncle, in this trying moment, confirmed the truth of the poet's testimony. Had any one *told* Sir Oliver that his son Nicholas had slipped away from college, and taken a clandestine trip to London, in all probability the account would have been received without much manifestation of surprise, and with no great degree of indignation against what, if we may draw any inference from his usual mode of reasoning on hearing of any of my Cousin's freaks, he would, in all probability, have considered as a youthful frolic, not altogether unbecoming a "lad of spirit." But when he found himself, as he supposed, most unexpectedly brought into immediate contact with him in the very act of his delinquency, and, above all, laughed at, absolutely disowned, and, to use a favourite phrase of

his own, "made quite a May-game of" by his lively offspring; — when, too, it is recollected that he, in general, only approved of, and smiled at, Nicholas's flights of fancy, so long as his wit was directed against others, it need occasion no surprise if his anger now knew no bounds, but amounted almost to frenzy. It was with difficulty he found words to express his feelings with, but when they did come forth, they rushed along in an animated flow of overbearing eloquence, as the long pent-up torrent, having once surmounted the barriers opposed to it, springs forward with tenfold energy from the temporary restraint it has experienced. Stunning as was its effect, the stranger, whom he persisted in calling his son, once more met him in midway, but his countenance had now lost the ironical gravity which gave point to his last speech, and assumed a severer cast, as he exclaimed, "Hold, Mr. Bullwinkle, if that be your name.—I see your mistake, and can pardon it, as it seems to arise from a resemblance, real or fancied, between myself and some member of your family. On

that account, as well as in consideration of your age and respectable appearance, I can excuse the language which you have just suffered to escape your lips; but, Sir, it must not be repeated. If you wish to know my name, it is Hanbury, Sir — Captain Hanbury, of the Coldstream Guards ——”

“ It is a lie ! — it ’s Nicholas Bullwinkle, and nothing else,” roared Sir Oliver, half mad with passion — “ but I ’ll be even with you, you scoundrel ; I ’ll disinherit you, you ungrateful dog ; I ’ll cut you off with a shilling ; I ’ll ——”

“ Silence ! old madman,” cried the now angry officer ; “ another such word, and not even your years shall protect your shoulders from my horsewhip, or your nose from an application that may bring you to your senses !”

This was too bad ; and the Baronet, in the excess of his rage, raised his cane, but the impending blow was immediately intercepted by the spectators, who now interfered, and compelled Sir Oliver to desist, while Captain Hanbury, though not a little irritated, was prevailed upon by his friend Sybthorpe and others,

just as I came up, to withdraw, nor continue an altercation with an old man, who was either mad or drunk, and one which could not but end discreditably to all concerned, if it were any farther pursued.

The principal part of these particulars I drew from Sir John Allanby, who, from an adjoining box, had witnessed a great part of the dispute ; for Sir Oliver, though his wrath was somewhat abated, in the violence of its expression at least, was still too angry to give anything like a connected account of the *fracas*.

Two things struck me as being very unaccountable in this business, nor, after cool consideration, could I come to any decided opinion upon the merits of the case. In the first place, it was exceedingly improbable that a father could have been so deceived by any common similarity of person as to pronounce, and persist in declaring, an absolute stranger to be his only son ; that in figure, in voice, in countenance, (barring the whiskers, which might have been assumed,) the resemblance should be so perfect as to impose upon one so well qualified

to judge of the identity, was hardly to be conceived.— And yet, on the other hand, every other circumstance tended to support the probability that a strong personal likeness had indeed deceived Sir Oliver. The whole conduct of the individual attacked was precisely that of a man mistaken for another of whom he has no knowledge; and his behaviour, though on such a supposition it might even be entitled to the praise of forbearance, was still not such as a son, however well inclined he might be to carry on a deception of the kind, could be imagined capable of practising towards a parent. It was impossible to believe that even Nicholas could threaten to violate the sanctity of a father's person, or dare to menace his gray hairs with indignity and outrage. Then, too, the name— Captain Hanbury, if such he were, had made no secret of his rank and character, while the proximity of the honourable corps of which he professed himself a member, laid him open, if an impostor, to almost immediate detection.

This last argument, I must confess, weighed

most strongly with me, as I could not bring myself to believe that the natural sagacity of Nicholas would ever allow him to commit himself so far as to assume a name, his pretensions to which might be so easily and so soon disproved. At my suggestion, after the matter had been pretty well canvassed, the Army List for the month was procured from the coffee-room, and examined, and there certainly, among the number of lieutenants in the Coldstream, all bearing of course the rank of captain, stood the name of Thomas Walton Hanbury. This fact tended much to incline me towards the latter opinion; and Sir Oliver himself, now that the object of his wrath was removed from his view, was, as I could see, staggered, especially when Allanby, repeating the name two or three times over, as if to aid some faded recollection, declared that he had a vague idea of having somewhere or other either met with, or heard of, a Captain Hanbury of the Guards, and that the impression upon his mind was, that the person who bore that name was a young man of family and honour, though said to be rather too much

addicted to enjoying, in their fullest extent, the pleasures afforded by the metropolis.

At this account, Sir Oliver, in whose opinion Sir John held a high rank, became evidently more thoughtful and embarrassed. At length he exclaimed,—“I’ll tell you what, nephew Charles, nothing on earth but my own eyes shall ever convince me that the jackanapes who threatened to pull my nose two hours ago, was not my Nick! — But I’ll be resolved: — Yes, before I utterly send him to the d—l, I’ll be resolved. I’ll hamper the puppy. My determination is taken.— By daybreak to-morrow, I’ll be off to Oxford, and, wo betide the rascal, if I find that he has been outside the College gates for this month past!”

There is a particular breed of animals, which courtesy forbids me to name, proverbial for the resistance they oppose to any one who would lead or drive them. Sir Oliver, when his resolution was once taken, was scarcely less persevering than the most obstinate porker of them all. In vain did I suggest the avowed reason of his coming to town, and the anxiety I

laboured under to be properly introduced to Lord Manningham, though, sooth to say, I was not altogether sorry for what I considered as at least a respite, if not a reprieve. My Uncle was positive; and after having opposed him as long as I thought decency required, I was at length obliged to acquiesce in his determination. He put into my hands the re-written letter of my mother, which he told me I might present myself on the morrow if I pleased; and I heard him, with no small satisfaction, on our return to the hotel, order a post-chaise to be in readiness the next morning at five o'clock, to carry him the first stage on his way to Alma Mater. When I rose the next day, I found that he had been gone four hours, and was by that time about half-way on the road to the place of his destination.

Let not the reader think, meanwhile, that I had forgotten my engagement with Mesdames Wilkinson and Morgan. Far from it. I had taken advantage of a temporary cessation in the conversation, while Sir Oliver was deeply

engaged with his lobster, and leaving Allanby to entertain him, had slipped back to the theatre, in order to keep my appointment. But I might have well saved myself the trouble, inasmuch as the parties I was in quest of had already quitted the house, not wishing, in all probability, to avail themselves of the services of so forward a cavalier as myself. This, however, gave me much less disturbance than it otherwise would have done, as I was now in possession of the name and occupation of Mrs. Wilkinson, and felt little doubt but that, with such a clew, a very trifling degree of patience and perseverance would enable me to ascertain her abode. I therefore returned, and rejoined the two Baronets, having been hardly missed by either the one or the other.

Full of newly-raised hopes from the auspicious rencontre of the preceding evening, I was despatching my breakfast with much more deliberation and satisfaction than I had done of late, when the waiter delivered me a letter, just brought in by the two-penny post, and, as far

as I could decipher the hieroglyphics which composed the superscription, intended for myself. It was addressed to

“ Mustar Stuffart,

“ Taffystork Hothell,

“ Coffin Garding.”

and contained the following communication :

“ SUR,

“ I haf fund out hoo the ladies you nose
about ham, han wear they is ; han this is hall
I dares to sey, for fire of haccidence ; but hif
you wil com to wear your nose, han wring has
husal, you shal larn more frum

“ Your loven Sarvant

“ tell deth,

“ SARY JENNENS.”

“ Sicks a'clock,

“ Vensday hafternone.”

Never did that egregious antiquary, Thomas Hearne, chuckle with greater delight over a newly-deciphered Celtic inscription, than did I on unravelling the hidden meaning of this, to me, most precious of manuscripts.—I kissed the

dear dirty piece of paper, and delicious pot-hooks, a thousand times ; and scarcely did that favourite device of Cupid's signet, the deep indentation of the thimble-top on the half-masticated wafer, escape the same vivid token of my regard. I could not doubt but that my better Genius had at length surmounted the various provoking obstacles thrown in his way by the demon of mischance, and that I was at last to be made happy with the intelligence I had so long and so eagerly desired to obtain. Oh ! how I blessed the happy quarrel of the preceding evening, which, by so opportunely removing Sir Oliver from the scene of action, left me free as air to follow the dictates of my own inclination, without the interruption and restraint which his presence would necessarily have imposed. I lost not a moment in repairing to Jermyn Street, nor did Miss Jennens keep me long in suspense. She told me that all her endeavours to discover who the ladies were, or whence they came, had been ineffectual till the day before, when, to her great joy, the elder of them came once more in a hackney-coach,

to call on Mrs. Morgan ; that on her going up stairs, she, Sally, had taken an opportunity of questioning the coachman as to the place whence he had brought his fare. A proffered pot of the infusion of molasses and *coccus Indicus*, by courtesy termed beer, rendered honest Jarvis communicative, and obtained her the information she wanted. He had brought the lady from No. 84 in Grosvenor Square, where she lived, as he inferred from what fell from one of the servants who put her into the coach, in the capacity of housekeeper. Sally added, that after taking tea together, the lady and Mrs. Morgan had gone to the play, whence they returned earlier than usual in a coach ; that “ the lady ” did not then get out, but merely set her companion down ; after which, my informant distinctly heard the order given to “ drive to 84, Grosvenor Square.”

While Sally Jennens was finishing her account, my hands were already employed in rummaging my pocket-book for the letter which had been, the evening before, given to me by my Uncle. It was readily found, and I hastily

reperused its address. — I was before sure I could not have mistaken it. — It was the same — “To the Right Hon. Viscount Manningham, Grosvenor Square, London,” with the magic number, “84,” legibly inscribed in the O.P. angle. — The very house !

Closely did I cross-examine the chambermaid respecting her certainty of the correctness of the number. The girl was positive, and her testimony was repeated with the firmness of a Jew qualifying for bail at the Old Bailey, while I hardly knew whether to hope or fear that her story might be true in all its parts. She persisted, however, that she had heard the number distinctly on both occasions, and that she could not be mistaken. I gave her a reward, which produced me in return a curtsey down to the ground, and retired, exceedingly mystified and much puzzled as to my future mode of proceeding.

Was it possible that my fair incognita was indeed domesticated with Mrs. Wilkinson, and residing under Lord Manningham’s roof? — and, if so, in what capacity? — or was she but

a friend of the housekeeper, who had taken her to the theatre!—Could it be that she was Miss Stafford herself?—The idea startled as it struck me, but I dismissed it sorrowfully from my mind as unlikely, and indeed absurd. The utter improbability that the Honourable Amelia Stafford, the admired heiress of one of the most wealthy and respected noblemen in the three kingdoms, should accompany a domestic to the pit at Covent Garden; or that, even if she were inclined so to commit herself, her father, whose notions of decorum and etiquette, especially where females were concerned, were remarkably rigid—that *he* should permit so great a violation of both, and that, too, without any adequate motive—it was not possible to believe it.

One circumstance alone seemed at the first view to favour the supposition. A carriage, it appeared, attended too by servants, had called on the eventful evening when I first saw the party, and conveyed them away from Mrs. Morgan's;—but I had omitted to inquire whether it had in the first instance carried them

there, and for the servants of gentlemen in London to make use of the carriages of their masters, after setting them down at their various engagements, and to employ the said carriages during the interval, at the expiration of which their attendance would be again required, was, as I well knew, no uncommon occurrence.

Or it might be, that this young lady was the daughter of some person in a respectable station in life, and intrusted temporarily to Mrs. Wilkinson's care — a supposition which was much strengthened by the marked deference which I could not fail to remark in the good woman's behaviour towards her, and which had first given rise to the idea that the parties were not connected by any ties of consanguinity; this idea, too, derived added confirmation from certain points in Mrs. Wilkinson's demeanour when I encountered her for the second time. All these conjectures, however, led to no satisfactory termination, nor could I draw any certain conclusion from combining them. As to the booby who made the third person in the party, I easily ascertained from Sally that he

was a son of Mrs. Morgan's, and a junior clerk in one of the public offices.

Deeply immersed in cogitation, as I wandered through the now crowded streets, scarcely knowing whither I was walking, my feet seemed instinctively to convey me towards the quarter whither my thoughts had already strayed, and I found myself, all at once, perambulating the northern side of Grosvenor Square.

The door of an elegant mansion in the angle nearest to me stood open ; a respectable-looking man-servant, in a plain suit, was in the entrance, while two others, in handsome liveries of green and gold, were employed in opening the door of a fashionable, dark-green, town-chariot, (the panels of which were simply ornamented by a plain crest, surmounted by a viscount's coronet,) and assisting its occupants to alight. A tall, gentlemanly-looking personage, in an undress military blue frock, with his hair *en queue*, and his striking figure a little bowed by age, stepped out first, and turning, offered his hand to facilitate the descent of a beautifully-formed female figure, whose plain white satin

spencer, and Spanish hat of the same delicate material, exhibited to advantage a person cast in the truest mould of elegance and grace. As she tripped lightly into the hall, she half turned to adjust some little derangement of her dress ; and one glimpse only, hastily caught beneath the snowy plume that vibrated gracefully above her polished brow, was sufficient to impress upon my mind the recollection of a countenance which, once seen, could never again be eradicated from my memory.—It was herself,—radiant in excess of loveliness, and looking, if possible, even more beautiful than when I had last beheld her.—I hastened forward, unconscious of what I purposed ;—but it was too late. The door had already closed, and shut her from my view.

“ Lord Manningham’s carriage, I believe ! ” said I to the servant, who was now mounting the box, after having drawn up the blinds of the chariot, and closed the door.

“ It is, sir,” he replied, respectfully touching his hat, and in a moment the vehicle was out of sight.

I could no longer doubt.—This then was the beautiful Amelia Stafford!—the fair being who was already prepared to look with so favourable an eye upon the addresses of her unknown admirer, and who was already the idolized object of that favoured and happy mortal!—I hesitated no more; doubt, fear, and anxiety, at once gave way before the renovating warmth of love, as the dews of morn before the rising beams of a brilliant summer sun.

The urgency of my summons brought a servant immediately to the door.

“Inform Lord Manningham,” said I, “that Mr. Charles Stafford requests to be admitted to his presence.”—I heard the man deliver the message at a door which opened from the entrance hall to a breakfast-parlour on the right. The recollection of my gallant father, whose beloved brother would so soon press me to his heart, kindled my enthusiasm, and filled my young bosom with ten thousand nameless emotions. I had already advanced half across the hall, in my eagerness to grasp the hand of a relative who had evinced such noble sentiments,

such generous intentions, in my favour, burning to meet his paternal caresses with a due return of correspondent warmth, when I heard these words issue from the interior of the room towards which I was advancing, as they were delivered to the servant who had announced me, and who yet stood with the door half-open in his hand —

“ Mr. Charles Stafford !—Turn the scoundrel out of the house instantly, and never suffer him to enter these doors again ! ! ”

CHAPTER X.

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit."

Virg.

In amaze

I gaze,

And in all sorts of ways

Stands my hair,—when my voice I endeavour to raise

I find through my jaws I can't squeeze it !

A "PRETTY PARTICULAR HANDSOME FIX."—ASTONISHMENT.
—INDIGNATION —TWO LETTERS, AND ONE ANSWER.

READER, if thou art a sportsman, thou hast doubtless often seen, in some fine thick stubble of newly reaped wheat, or equally attractive covert of umbrageous turnip, the well-trained Don, or stanchest Ponto, check himself suddenly in full career, and become, on the instant, fixed, immovable ; every limb and muscle

stretched to its utmost tension, and scarcely exhibiting any sign of life.

Or if — as I would fain flatter myself may be the case — if thou art some amiable and accomplished young lady, who, despite the warning voice of “Mamma,” and the harsher remonstrances of “Papa,” art in the habit of soothing the soft sorrows of thy sentimental soul by the perusal of the last new novel, to while away the tedious moments until “the Captain” calls — then hast thou, as undoubtedly, in the course of thy studies, fallen in with that wonderful account of the Petrified City, in which men, women, children, dogs, cats, old maids, and other domestic animals, are described as standing transformed to stone, each in the precise attitude which it had assumed at the moment of the miraculous and sudden metamorphosis.

This city, by the way, certain modern travellers assure us, is still *in esse*, and to be found somewhere between Tunis and Timbuctoo, though none of them, as far as I can find, have actually made their bivouac within its precincts.

Or if thou art of "the Livery," Reader, then hast thou, perchance, beheld the Alderman of thy Ward, at my Lord Mayor's feast, with fixed eye and dropping jaw-bone, sink back into his elbow-chair, after his ninth basin of callipee.

Or if thou art a Bachelor of Arts, thou hast read, it may be, (for I would not hazard an assertion rashly,) of the singular properties of the Gorgon's head,—and of the Knaresborough Well that turned an elderly gentleman's wig into stone in fifteen seconds.

If, unhappily, thou art none of all these, then must I despair of conveying to thy mind anything like a correct idea of the absolute immobility of form and feature,—the utter suspension of animation which paralysed all my faculties, as sounds so unexpected and inauspicious struck thus suddenly on my sensorium!—nor had I in any degree recovered myself, when the servant, a respectable-looking man, having closed the parlour-door, returned and informed me, in a hesitating tone, "His Lordship had commanded him to say, that neither at present, nor at any

future period, would it be convenient for him to receive the visits of Mr. Charles Stafford."

Aghast as I was, I at length recovered myself so far as to reply, that I was confident there must be some mistake in the matter, as I had come on Lord Manningham's own express invitation, and was indeed his Lordship's nephew. The man firmly, but respectfully, replied, that he was certain no mistake had been committed in the name, and that his Lord's orders were peremptory. Not choosing therefore to enter into an altercation with a servant, and, indeed, but too well convinced, by the evidence of my own ears, that the man had softened, rather than aggravated the harshness of the message of which he was the bearer, I quitted the house, and regained the street, in a state of confusion, arising from mingled anger, mortification, and disappointment at once pitiable and ludicrous.

"So then!" I exclaimed at last, when a five minutes' perambulation of Brook Street had furnished me with breath sufficient to form into

articulate sounds — “ So then ! this is the ‘ paternal reception ’ — this is the fulfilment of those ‘ generous intentions in my favour,’ which my kind but deceived mother has sent me up to London to experience !—A mighty courteous and ‘ fatherly reception,’ truly ! — But this business rests not here ; I will probe this infamous mockery to the bottom, and, were he twenty times my uncle, Lord Manningham shall repent the unprovoked insult he has dared offer to a Stafford.”

My indignation having once found vent in words, relieved itself in some degree by the use of them ; but, as passion subsided, my astonishment revived and increased.

What could be the meaning of the treatment I had received ?—Was it possible that Lord Manningham, a nobleman of grave and dignified habits, one whose reputation for the possession of every accomplishment that adorns the gentleman, the soldier, and the scholar, stood unimpeachable,—that a man who had always professed, and, as I had every reason to believe, felt, the strongest and most disinterested regard

for his deceased brother—that *he* should wantonly, and without provocation, go out of his way, merely for the purpose of wounding the feelings and disgracing the character of that brother's only child—of one, too, who, neither in fact nor by implication, could ever have given him offence, and to whose very person he was a stranger!—It was altogether unaccountable—was incredible—and the longer I reflected, the more convinced did I feel that some mystery enveloped the whole transaction, the intricacies of which I was at present completely incompetent to unravel. The more I pondered upon the circumstance of my extraordinary exclusion from Grosvenor Square, the more certain this inference appeared, when at once the question occurred, Had I been traduced?—had any villain, envious of my rising prospects, aspersed my character, and painted me, perhaps, to my rigidly correct relation, in all the sombre colours of his own malignity?—But even then, was I to be condemned unheard?—Were all the partial representations of a fond and anxious mother, eager to promote the success of a be-

loved son, to sink at once before the suggestions of a comparative stranger, without any room allowed for investigation or inquiry?—Could my uncle be displeased at my having so long delayed to avail myself of his invitation?—I could hardly think that, in such a case, he would, without leaving any opening for explanation or apology, inflict a punishment so glaringly disproportionate to the offence.

On the whole, I could not but conclude that, either from some misapprehension, or the malicious interference of an enemy, Lord Manningham had been induced to credit some report, highly derogatory to my character, which, on every account, it behoved me to clear up. Unwilling, therefore, as I was, to agitate my mother unnecessarily, I resolved to forbear at present from writing to the Hall, and to employ the interval between the present time and Sir Oliver's expected return from Oxford in the elucidating, if possible, this strange occurrence.

As a preliminary step, I took the first opportunity, on reaching the Tavistock, to despatch a porter to Grosvenor Square with the following letter :—

“Tavistock Hotel, Covent Garden.

“MY LORD,

“After the very extraordinary and mortifying repulse which I experienced at your door this morning, nothing but a sense of what is due to myself, and to those with whose friendship and affection I am honoured, could have induced me to trouble your Lordship any farther.

“In what that very cavalier repulse, as unexpected as undeserved, could have originated, I am at a loss to imagine. I take leave, however, to remind your Lordship that I presented myself on your own express and unsolicited invitation, and that the letter, of which I was the bearer, from the honoured widow of the late Colonel Stafford, might at least, I should conceive, have secured her son from insult or contempt.

“The only way in which I can account for such treatment, is the supposition, that malevolent and slanderous tongues may have dared to misrepresent some motive or action of my life, without my being aware of it. If this be the case, from my father's brother I entreat as

a favour, and from Lord Manningham I demand as a right, an opportunity of vindicating my conduct.

“ In the firm belief that the unpleasant circumstance, to which I allude, must have had its source in mistake or calumny, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s very obedient

“ Nephew and Servant,

“ CHARLES STAFFORD.”

“ To the Right Hon. The Viscount Manningham,
Grosvenor Square.”

The interval which necessarily elapsed between the despatch of this epistle and the reception of the eagerly expected answer, would have been a severe trial to my patience, but for the appearance of a visitor, whose presence and communication served, in some degree, to fill up the pause, and to abstract from the tediousness of time. This visitor was Allanby, whom, on parting with him the night before, I had requested to gain any information he might be

able to procure, that would tend to throw a light upon my Uncle's mysterious adventure at Drury Lane.

Sir John had good-humouredly promised to comply with my wishes, and now assured me that there was every reason to suppose that Sir Oliver had really been mistaken in the person of the gentleman with whom he had so decidedly claimed consanguinity.

On inquiry, he had ascertained from an officer of the Coldstream, with whom he had a family connection, not only that Captain Hanbury, of that very distinguished regiment, had been in London on the previous evening, but also that he had actually been at the theatre, and had afterwards, at the Guards' Club-House, given to some of his friends, in the informant's hearing, an animated account of a "famous good row" which he had just had at the play-house, the particulars of which Sir John's relative had not had sufficient curiosity to attend to.

In consequence of this intelligence, Allanby, decided as he now considered the matter to be, resolved on availing himself of an introduction,

readily offered by his friend, when he had explained his reason for wishing for one, and on calling upon the gallant Captain, ostensibly for the purpose of making excuses in Sir Oliver's name for the mistake into which he had unadvisedly fallen, and thus to put the matter beyond dispute. On reaching his lodgings in Albemarle Street, however, he found that Captain Hanbury had started, a few hours before, with a party of friends, for Windsor, and that the time of his return was altogether uncertain.

I could have wished, for my own satisfaction, that the friendly Baronet had succeeded in obtaining a personal interview with the gentleman, though, on reconsidering the whole circumstance, I could not fail to join with him in the conviction, that my Uncle had indeed laboured under a delusion, and was now gone upon a wild-goose chase ; a fact of which, till this moment, I could not help entertaining a considerable degree of doubt. I gave Allanby many thanks for the trouble he had so kindly taken, and he had just risen for the purpose of leaving me, after an ineffectual attempt to

prevail on me to dine with him, when the long-expected reply to my appeal was put into my hands by the well-remembered lackey in the "green and gold."

I retreated to a window to peruse it, and read as follows:—

"SIR,

"The letter you have just thought proper to transmit, convinces me of what I could scarcely have conceived possible,—that your worthlessness and folly are even exceeded by your audacity.

"That you came hither at 'my express and unsolicited invitation' is true;—that invitation, Sir, was dictated by the affection I ever bore your gallant father,—a father whose name you should blush to pronounce,—and by the hope that in the representative of his person I should find the inheritor of his virtues. Had that 'Colonel Stafford,' whose name you dare to profane, lived to witness this disgraceful conduct of his degenerate son, it would have broken his heart.—I can no longer lament his decease.

“The whole of your dishonourable career is now fully known to me ; to much of it, especially to your infamous tampering with the honesty of a servant, I had previously been an indignant, though unsuspected witness. Your insinuation as to the agency of slander and calumny is as despicable as you know it to be false, and your behaviour will admit neither vindication nor apology.

“Miss Stafford holds you in the contempt you merit ; the bauble which your artifices forced upon her has been transmitted to your mother, together with the lamentable detail of her son’s profligacy.

“Desist, young man, from intruding any farther upon the members of a family who disown and despise you, or you may be taught that not even the fond recollection of departed worth, nor the name which you bear and disgrace, will longer prove your protection from the chastisement you deserve, or operate as a motive to forbearance on

“MANNINGHAM.”

This gentle, and conciliating epistle was duly endorsed to "Charles Stafford, Esq. Tavistock Hotel."

Its contents rekindled at once the smothered embers of my anger, and furnished fresh materials for my surprise.

Galling and contemptuous as were the terms in which it was couched, the very natural indignation I experienced on its perusal, was quickly merged in wonder.—Had then my name and person been all the while so well known to her whose address I had made so many efforts to discover?—Had all my actions been so closely watched and observed, at the very time when my whole soul was occupied in watching and observing those of others, and that too without success?—Had even that, as I believed, most recondite circumstance, my having "tipped" Sally Jennens with five guineas for her information, been open to the inspection of some latent looker-on?—And then the vinaigrette—the so much despised "bauble"—which I had purchased as a means of gaining access to my then unknown charmer, had, as it appeared,

reached its destination, (a fact which I had more than doubted,) and had been since returned with ignominy “to my mother!”—I was lost in amazement.

But admitting all this—admitting that Lord Manningham himself had, which I could hardly have supposed possible, witnessed the whole of my manœuvres to obtain access to his daughter,—was there anything so very reprehensible in my conduct as to justify the reproach and vituperation contained in his letter, and the ignominious epithets therein applied to it!—If, in the eagerness of my desire to get possession of the address of a young lady I *had* bestowed a trifling *douceur* upon a servant girl, was there anything in the transaction to warrant the charge of “profligacy,” or of “tampering with a servant’s honesty?”—What if I had intruded on that young lady a paltry trinket!—Of impertinence she might perhaps with justice have accused me, but surely not of “worthlessness,” or “disgraceful conduct.”

Surely nothing but the very spirit of puritanism itself could affix epithets so severe to actions

so trifling, and, as I thought, so venial, in their nature.—But so it was;—and as pride alone would have prevented my making any further attempt at conciliating Lord Manningham, even had I seen the remotest chance of succeeding,—which I did not,—I resolved to avoid the unpleasant situation of being the herald of my own disgrace to Sir Oliver, and of being forced to reply to all the various queries with which I knew he would assail me, by leaving London immediately, and before his return.

Besides, I reflected that, should I act otherwise, and await his arrival, it was by no means improbable that, on hearing my story, he would, in his anxiety to have matters simplified, insist on my accompanying him once more to Grosvenor Square,—a measure against which every feeling of my soul revolted,—and subjecting myself, perhaps, to a repetition of the mortifying indignities I had already sustained ; or that, in the event of my refusal, Sir Oliver himself, of whose pertinacity of opinion I had had ample experience, might take it into his head to be offended with me, and thus I might seriously quarrel

with both my uncles, without any intention of affronting either.

This determination, therefore, I failed not to put in practice as quickly as possible, and, leaving a couple of notes to be delivered after my departure, once more set out on my return to Underdown Hall.

The first of these billets was addressed to Sir Oliver, to be given to him on his arrival, and ran thus :—

“ MY DEAR UNCLE,

“ Circumstances of an awkward nature, which I feel myself unable at present either to control or explain, have rendered it impossible for me to put in execution the intention with which I came to London.

“ A strong prejudice, whence originating I know not, appears to exist against me in the mind of Lord Manningham. Time may, perhaps, obliterate a feeling which seems to me as unaccountable as I know it to be unjust ; in the meanwhile, it may be better, perhaps, for all parties, that we should come as little into con-

tact as possible. I have therefore retired to the Hall, and, in the hope of soon witnessing your own return to the house which your indulgence has taught me to consider our mutual home, remain your affectionate Nephew,

“ C. STAFFORD.

“ P. S. I have been able to ascertain, almost to demonstration, that my Cousin Nicholas had no hand whatever in the unpleasant business at the theatre, but that your antagonist was indeed the very gentleman whom he represented himself to be.”

The other was directed to Lord Manningham.

“ MY LORD,

“ The son of that Colonel Stafford, ‘ whose decease you no longer regret,’ is only withheld by the respect due to his father’s memory, and the recollection of the near connexion between that revered parent and Viscount Manningham, from fully expressing to the latter his sentiments on the unfounded aspersions cast by him upon a character as unspotted as his own.

“ Be assured, my Lord, that the ‘ members of your family’ *will* be ‘ no more intruded on’ by one who now values your Lordship’s favour as little as he dreads the resentment with which you think proper to menace him.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ Your Lordship’s servant,

“ CHARLES STAFFORD.”

“ To Viscount Manningham,
&c. &c. &c.”

CHAPTER XI.

Inter Sylvas Academi quærere verum.—Hæc.

Through Academic groves

The puzzled Hero roves

To seek if facts be facts,—or all a mere hum!

A HASTY MAN.—A SICK MAN.—AN ANGRY MAN.—AN
OBSEQUIOUS MAN.—A LEARNED MAN.—AND A PUZZLED
MAN.

DURING part of this period, and while I was the alternate prey of fear, hope, disappointment, and indignation, Sir Oliver had proceeded, as fast as four stout roadsters could carry him, towards Oxford, anathematizing my Cousin Nicholas, at least ten times between every milestone and its successor, with bitter vows of taking the most complete and summary vengeance, in case he should find that his son had

deceived him, and in his person had actually menaced the nasal organs of a Bullwinkle with manual compression.

On his arrival at the Angel, he scarcely waited to discharge the post-boys, ere, hurrying, with the utmost expedition of which he was capable, to the venerable edifice of which his son was,—or ought to be,—an inmate, he inquired for the rooms of Mr. Nicholas Bullwinkle. They were immediately pointed out to him by an obsequious porter, and my Uncle proceeded, through a rank of marvelling freshmen, who were congregated in the quadrangle, to the staircase which led to his apartments. Sir Oliver tarried not to give even the usual petitionary knock at the inner door, but, turning the handle without scruple or delay, abruptly entered the room.

At a table loaded with folios of a most imposing bulk, and properly furnished with all the necessary adjuncts of pen, ink, and paper, clad in a long duffle wrapping-gown, with a pair of green spectacles upon his nose, and a rummer of water by his side,—sat my Cousin Nicholas.

His cheeks were pale, not to say haggard;—his form attenuated, and his whole appearance that of a man suffering under the oppression of serious indisposition. The sudden entrance of Sir Oliver caused him to start, and communicated a visible degree of tremor to his whole frame; the pen actually trembled in his hand as he exclaimed, on hearing the noise, “Who’s there!—Sanderson, is that you?—you know I am reading, and can’t see any body.”

“Nick!” quoth my Uncle Oliver, “is it you, Nick!—Speak to me, you rascal, and tell me, is that you!”

“My dear father!—impossible!—can I believe my eyes!—here, Jem!—porter!—My dear sir, to what am I to attribute this very unexpected pleasure!—Nothing the matter at the Hall, I hope!—here, Jem, I say, come up directly and be —— to you!”

The concluding sentence of this address was uttered out of the window to a “scout” in the quadrangle,—(bells were rare in Brazenose)—and was delivered in a tone of the utmost impatience;—then placing a chair, the invalid once

more felicitated himself on the arrival of his father, and extended his hand towards him, as if in expectation of a friendly shake.

"No, Sir," cried the Baronet, most uncere-
moniously rejecting his proffered salute. "Sit
down, Sir,—sit down, and answer me a few
questions, before I make up my mind whether
I am ever to acknowledge you as my son again
or not."

"My dear Sir, what can be the meaning of
this most alarming preface!—However, I am
much too happy to see you, on any terms, to
quarrel with the cause which affords me the
pleasure of your company."

"I do not believe one word of it," quoth my
Uncle,— "you would as lieve see the devil,
Sir;—but here I am, and here I mean to re-
main, till you have told me how you dared
offer me such an insult as you did last night;
—how you had the assurance"—my Uncle's
voice rose an octave—"to threaten to pull
my nose!"

If anger was the predominant expression of
Sir Oliver's countenance, astonishment seemed

no less forcibly portrayed in that of my Cousin. —“Pull your nose, my dear father! — last night! — you surprise me; what can be the meaning of all this? — Has any one dared to insult you! — If so, be assured I shall resent it as a son ought to do, and I cannot tell you how highly gratified I feel that you should have taken the trouble of coming thus far, to give me an opportunity of chastising the insolence of ——”

“Be quiet, puppy, and answer me—nobody’s insolence is to be chastised but your own.—Tell me, Sir, how dared you deny all knowledge of me, to my face, at Drury Lane, no longer ago than last night!”

“Drury La—! — my dear Sir,” cried the now alarmed Nicholas, “I have not been out of my room this fortnight; surely, Sir, the fatigue of your journey,—or something,—has discomposed you—let me offer you some refreshment.—Why, Jem,” continued my Cousin, turning once more abruptly to the window, and carefully wrapping a silk handkerchief, that lay on the sofa near him, round his throat, as he

opened it,—“Jem, do you mean to come up to-day or not?”

“Nay, Sir,” cried Sir Oliver, “do not give Mr. Jem, whoever the gentleman may be, the trouble of walking up stairs, nor expose your own very delicate health to the influence of the cold air. I am neither drunk nor mad; so answer me in three words, and without any prevarication,—were you, or were you not, in London yesterday evening?”

“Not I, upon my word, Sir Oliver;—and why you should imagine such a thing, I cannot, for the life of me, conceive. Had I even entertained any intention of the kind, the indisposition under which I have been labouring for this fortnight past would alone have been sufficient to prevent my carrying it into effect,—to say nothing of my being engaged very busily in reading for my ‘*Little Go*’—my dear father, I am quite a skeleton; only look at me!—do feel my ribs!”

“Curse your ribs!” cried the Baronet, “I’ll break every one of them; I’ll ——”

Here the scout entered the room.

"Jem," said my Cousin Nicholas, "my father is just arrived in Oxford; go to the kitchen and buttery, and make them send up something immediately—and borrow me a bottle of wine, Jem,—it is so long since I drank any, that I am afraid my own cellar will not afford one—and, Jem,—come back and help me to put these books out of the way."

Jem stared, made a short quick bow, and was retiring, when his retreat was cut off by Sir Oliver—

"Stop one moment, Mister Jem,—if that is your name,—I beg of you; and please to inform me, Mister Jem, at what hour did this young gentleman return from London?"

The man looked all astonishment—he gazed alternately at my Uncle and his son, and made no answer.

"Jem," said my Cousin, "some officious blockhead or other has put it into my father's head that I was in town no longer ago than yesterday;—you, I think, can satisfy him that

I have not even left my room this fortnight till this very day, when I went, for the first time since my illness, to morning chapel."

"Very true, Sir," returned Jem; "I called you — by your orders — at six o'clock."

"Indeed!" returned Sir Oliver; "I must, however, have better evidence than even that of the very respectable Mr. Jem, before I believe one syllable of the matter; so, Mr. Nicholas Bullwinkle, if you please, we will adjourn to the apartments of your tutor, and hear his opinion of the business—unless, indeed, the very delicate state of your health should render it dangerous for you to accompany me."

"By all means, Sir;—I will attend you with the greatest pleasure; indeed, I do not know but that the air may be of service to me. Jem, —my great-coat!"

The obsequious James produced the required surtout, which my Cousin, having first taken off and leisurely wiped his spectacles, proceeded to indue, with a degree of deliberation that formed a fine contrast with the impatience manifested in every twist and turn of Sir Oli-

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ver's features. The bandana received a more careful and studied adjustment round the throat, and the usual paraphernalia of academic costume being duly arranged over all, Nicholas seemed prepared to accompany his father, when, before they reached the door of the apartment, he stopped suddenly, and exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, Sir Oliver, may I detain you one moment! — The tincture, Jem; — surely it is time that I took my tincture!"

The obedient scout repaired to a closet on the other side of the room, from which he produced a half-pint bottle and a glass, into the latter of which he carefully poured two table-spoonfuls of a dark-coloured fluid, bearing a most suspicious resemblance to cherry-brandy. This he extended to my Cousin Nicholas, who received and swallowed it, not without a due contortion of visage; — then, without any further attempt at delay, he followed the impatient Baronet down the staircase, but *laud passibus æquis*, and supporting himself by the banister.

The pair proceeded in solemn silence; the

younger gentleman having been suddenly cut short by the elder in the very commencement of an embryo dissertation on the medicinal qualities of "Huxham's Tincture of Bark."

In this way, notwithstanding the procrastination occasioned by the tardiness of my Cousin, whose pace very little exceeded that which is termed by military men "marking time," the door of the Reverend Josiah Pozzlethwayte's apartment was at length attained, and they were received by that learned tutor with all the dignity of a fellow of a college, beautifully tempered by the urbanity of a gentleman, despite a slight shade of vexation, which a keen observer might have detected stealing over his countenance at the interruption his visitors occasioned to the progress of a very erudite and entertaining little treatise on the various gerunds in *Di*, *Do*, and *Dum*, which he was on the point of completing, and offering to the world in three quarto volumes.

Sir Oliver, who was by no means a man of many words, introduced himself and his errand with truly Spartan brevity, while his polite

auditor listened with attention, and replied to his inquiries in a manner which savoured more of the elegance of Attic, than the force and conciseness of Lacedemonian, oratory, while the classic mind of my Cousin Nicholas, who remained for some time a silent, though not uninterested observer, at once suggested to him "the image of a supposed Pericles listening to one of an imaginary Ephori."

This he afterwards told my Uncle, who, not knowing anything of either of the gentlemen named, nor quite approving the expression of countenance with which the remark was uttered, was very near breaking his head in return for his elegant allusion.

The evidence, if such it may be termed, of the learned tutor was, however, equally in my Cousin's favour with that of Jem East, the scout, and seemed altogether irreconcilable with Sir Oliver's hypothesis.

The Reverend Mr. Pozzlethwayte was a great logician; he could demonstrate, without the slightest difficulty, that although "John was a man, and Peter was a man," yet, from

a want of the necessary "distribution of the Middle Term," it was by no means a legitimate consequence that "John was Peter;"—he gave Sir Oliver most convincing reasons why it was impossible that his son should be, at one and the same time, present at two different places fifty-six miles asunder;—he proved, first, that it was "Term Time at Oxford"—secondly, that no Undergraduate could be absent without leave when it was "Term Time at Oxford"—then, that my Cousin Nicholas was an Undergraduate—after that, that my Cousin Nicholas had no leave of absence,—and then triumphantly drew his inference, that of course my Cousin Nicholas could not be absent during "Term Time at Oxford."

He changed his battery, and demonstrated that "a man who was too ill to move could never have gone from Oxford to London—but my Cousin was too ill to move—*therefore* my Cousin could not have gone from Oxford to London."

He argued from cause to effect, and then

reasoned back again from effect to cause;—now he pressed his auditor with all the syllogistic energies of “*Major*,” “*Minor*,” and “*Consequence* ;”—then he crushed him beneath the overwhelming weight of a “*Sorites* ;”—and finally compelled him, by a judicious use of Socratic interrogation, to prove himself an unredeemed blockhead.

Sir Oliver—who, in the discharge of what he called his duties as a magistrate for the county, had not unfrequently listened with admiration and conviction “at Sessions” to the luminous statements of the counsel on one side, till the equally brilliant effusions of the counsel on the other side provokingly brought the matter once more into doubt,—now, when the full tide of argument took a decided and uncontradicted turn, gave way to a torrent which he found it beyond his power to stem;—slowly and most reluctantly did he yield a grumbling assent to propositions which he was unable to refute, though almost equally unwilling to admit.

After sifting the matter as closely as he

could, the result of all his inquiries was, that Mr. Bullwinkle had been "*ager*" for more than a fortnight, and his sickly appearance certainly tended much to corroborate this representation. It was also ascertained by reference to the Bible-clerk that he had actually been at chapel that morning at half-past six; "Jem," moreover, testified that he had himself summoned him from his bed half-an-hour before, while the rules of academic discipline precluded the opening of the college gates till after morning-prayers.—My Cousin would have got his acquittal in any court in Christendom, and Sir Oliver was obliged to succumb, which he at length did, but with a very bad grace, and as if only half-convinced.

It is recorded of a right worshipful citizen, who thrice filled the civic chair of the greatest corporation in the world, and was honoured by his fellow-citizens, at his decease, with a monument erected to his memory, at the public expense, and which still forms a principal ornament of that very Guildhall which had so often been the scene of his triumphs,—it is on re-

cord, I say, that he once overwhelmed a Prime Minister, by an energetic declaration, that "*them there facts is stubborn things!*"—Sir Oliver Bullwinkle could no more invalidate the force of Alderman Beckford's axiom than could the Premier.

CHAPTER XII.

——— Oh ! what damned minutes counts he o'er
Who dotes yet doubts,—suspects yet strongly loves.

OTHELLO.

Noscitur a Naso !

He said he 'd pull my Nose !—I heard him say so.

CARDS, THE DEVIL'S BOOKS.—A RELAPSE.—WHAT'S IN A
NAME ?

THE worthy Baronet and his hopeful heir retraced their steps towards the apartments of the latter, Sir Oliver hardly knowing whether he was pleased or sorry at the conviction which had been, in a manner, forced upon him.

That the character of his son had come out of the fiery ordeal, to which it had been subjected, pure and immaculate as a new laid egg,

was, to be sure, a subject of much self-congratulation ; but then the unwelcome truth would force itself on his recollection, that, in proportion as the conduct of Nicholas appeared blameless, his own must seem absurd ; nor could he help feeling that, all things considered, he was cutting a tolerably ridiculous figure. In no very enviable state of mind he ascended the stairs of number 6, with much more of deliberation than had marked his progress down them an hour before, while the pace of Nicholas was accelerated in a corresponding ratio, so that they now contrived to keep tolerably well together.

On re-entering the room a small card of invitation lay on the table, giving evident proof that, during their absence, the apartment had been invaded by a visitor. The small piece of pasteboard alluded to bore, moreover, an inscription as interesting to Sir Oliver as any in the Theban catacombs, or on the sarcophagus of Cheops himself, could be to a modern traveller, possessing, besides, the incalculable advantage of being much more easily deciphered.

—The words it displayed were,

"Wine with Hanbury,

"O. C.

"Friday 11th."

And it was indorsed,

"N. Bullwinkle, Esq."

Had a basilisk met the eyes of my Uncle, he could not have exhibited a more theatric and imposing start!—The still alumbering embers of suspicion "flared up," at once, into as bright a blaze as the real element, from which this popular metaphor is taken, emits when some unlucky imp of mischief hurls, with too unerring aim, a handful of pounded resin into the fire, for the purpose of astounding a dozing grandmother, or electrifying a maiden aunt.—Every combustible particle in Sir Oliver's whole frame ignited on the instant.

"Hanbury!" exclaimed he, with the look, air, and voice of a male Tisiphone.

"A friend of mine, Sir Oliver," said Nicholas with the most perfect composure, not perceiving,—or not choosing to perceive,—the effect which this name of bad omen had upon his

father.—“ A college friend of mine, and a very good fellow he is, only rather too much of a bookworm ;—he is known here by the *sobriquet* of ‘ Sobersides ;’—I should like to join his party amazingly, if my health would permit me, for it is not often he ventures upon one ; but the ‘ *mens sana in corpore sano*,’ you know, Sir,—(Sir Oliver did *not* know,)—must be preferred to everything else ; and as it is in vain to expect intellectual without corporeal health, I must, however reluctantly, give up the idea, for I feel my nervous system is too much deranged to admit of my joining at present in any kind of gaiety, else—I must confess—I should like just to pop in my nose ——”

“ At a scoundrel’s who swore he would pull your father’s !” roared the indignant Baronet, in the tones of a Stentor.—Nicholas stood aghast.—For the first time there appeared in the expression of his countenance a sort of indefinite alarm, which might perhaps have been interpreted into an apprehension that the intellects of his father were affected.—It was some time before he found breath to utter—

with glances which seemed to indicate a suspicion that he would endeavour to run away, and at the same time grasping his arm with the force and tenacity of a smith's vice, as if fully determined to prevent his escape.

But Nicholas entertained no such intention ; he kept steadily on, till, on passing the portal surmounted by the huge projection of gilt wood, which has somehow or other been, facetiously enough, designated as the Brazen Nose, — an appellation as little warranted by its anti-metallic appearance, as by its want of resemblance to the feature it is said to represent — he again, in spite of the ungracious repulses which all his attempts at “ lionizing ” had hitherto met with, could not help directing his father's attention to the mystic emblem above him ; but in his present mood, the very word “ Nose ” sounded harshly in the ears of Sir Oliver, and he again bade his son “ cease his chattering,” in no very dulcet tones.

On reaching the place of their destination, Mr. Hanbury's “ oak ” was open. A rap with the knuckles at his door was immediately an-

swered by a cry of "Come in!" and Nicholas, with his father close at his heels, entered the room.

"Hanbury, my good fellow, how are you?" said the former, advancing with extended hand towards a young gentleman dressed in a morning gown, who rose from a sofa to receive him.

"I am sorry, Hanbury, I was not in the way this morning when you called, but I come to bring you my answer in person. In the meantime, allow me to introduce to you my father—Hanbury—Sir Oliver Bullwinkle."

During this exordium, Sir Oliver had been narrowly scrutinizing the person of his new acquaintance, but found himself once more baffled in his expectations, as neither in feature, voice, nor figure, did the gentleman before him bear the slightest resemblance to the object of his resentment—the likeness was in the name alone.

Still the coincidence was most remarkable, that among the more particular friends, and in the immediate society of his son, he should meet with a person of so ominous a designa-

tion, that, if the name of the one had but been united with the person of the other, no reasonable doubt could any longer have remained upon his mind.—He felt himself completely mystified ;—he knew not what to believe or to reject, and therefore only bowed and stammered in reply to the easy and polite reception given to him by young Hanbury as the father of his friend.

“ Bullwinkle,” said their host to my Cousin, after they had taken chairs, “ I am sincerely glad to see you out again ; you have had a sharp time of it ; and, not to flatter you, your illness has pulled you down not a little. I called to-day, as I had heard from Jones this morning that you had been at chapel, in the hope of prevailing on you to meet a few friends here on Friday : we shall be a very quiet party.”

“ I never knew one otherwise at your rooms, Hanbury ; and I believe, in spite of prudence, I should have joined you, but my father, as you see, is just arrived, and will not, I hope, leave Oxford for some days.—My time must of course be entirely at his disposal.”

"I trust I need not say," returned Hanbury, "how much I should be gratified by Sir Oliver's company also on that occasion, or that I shall feel great pleasure if any services of mine can be acceptable to him. You are but weak as yet, Bullwinkle, and, I am sure, altogether unequal to the task of making the tour of the University.—I shall be most happy if your father will accept me as your substitute."

Sir Oliver knew not what to make of all this. Mr. Hanbury's manners and address were polished and prepossessing, and his attentions to himself flattering. Had he borne any other name in the world, his politeness would have been met with cordiality. As it was, a vague idea that he was duped still most pertinaciously occupied the Baronet's mind, and repelled the growing inclination he felt to believe he had been indeed mistaken. By degrees, however, his suspicions gave way, especially when, in reply to one of the Baronet's questions, "Whether he had any relative in the Guards?" Hanbury unhesitatingly informed him that he had an elder brother in the Coldstream, "a man,

by the way, Sir Oliver, whom I could much wish to introduce to you, as I should like to see whether you would be able to discover in him that personal resemblance to my friend, your son, here, which many of our acquaintance insist is so very strong a one."

"Indeed, Sir!" asked Sir Oliver; "is the likeness so remarkable?"

"Astonishing, many of them affect to say; but, for my own part, I cannot say I see it in so strong a light as some do, who go the length of asserting that the pair might be taken for twins.—Nevertheless, I admit that they are a good deal alike. Indeed, I am not sure but that this resemblance to poor Tom,—(a worthy fellow at bottom, Sir Oliver, though I fear the dissipated scenes his profession exposes him to have rendered him not so steady as he used to be,)—has tended not a little to cement the friendship which exists between your son and myself.—Poor Tom! he certainly often puts me in mind of him!"

"Very often, indeed, I should think," re-

turned Sir Oliver. "Confound me if I should know the difference between them."

"Indeed, Sir Oliver.—You have seen my brother, then?"

"Why, I rather think I have—that is—Pray, sir, where may Captain Hanbury be at this moment?"

"Upon my word I can hardly say.—In London, it is most likely—at least I received a letter from him, (here it is,) about three days ago, dated from the St. James's Coffee-house; but he is so very locomotive, that, for anything I know to the contrary, he may be in the Hebrides by this time."

"I fancy, sir," replied the Baronet, "he is scarcely so far north. By what you tell me, I am induced to suppose that I must have been, for a very few minutes, in his company last night;—but come, sir," continued he, "if you are not otherwise engaged, and will favour my son and me with your company to a quiet dinner at my inn, you shall hear the whole history of the occasion of my journey to Oxford, in which

to speak the truth, your brother cuts no inconsiderable figure."

"You raise my curiosity greatly, Sir Oliver, and I shall feel much pleasure in accepting your invitation."

During the whole of this dialogue, my Cousin Nicholas, who took no share in it, was busily employed in turning over the leaves of a parcel of books which lay on a side-table, apparently absorbed in his pursuit, and paying very little or no attention to the subject of the duetto in performance between his father and his friend; but now, seeing the former preparing to depart, he closed the volume which he had been examining, and inquired with much gravity "Where Sir Oliver would choose to go next?"

"Back again to London, to be sure," was the reply; "but come, before I start, let us see what we can have for dinner, for my journey has made me as hungry as a hunter."

Nature herself abhors not a *vacuum* more than did Sir Oliver. The fumes of anger, which had hitherto expanded his chest, and produced an artificial and fallacious plenitude, had now, in a great

degree, evaporated, and his stomach might by this time be not unaptly compared to a balloon when an unlucky rent has suffered the major part of its gas to escape. He hurried his two companions to the inn, and ordered an excellent dinner, to which he did ample justice ; nor was either of his guests at all behind hand in following his example. Nicholas, in particular, made a very hearty meal for an invalid ; and the brisk circulation of a few flasks of very tolerable champagne seemed to produce an effect upon him to the full as salutary as his favourite "Huxham's Tincture of Bark."

It was late before the party separated ; nor did they break up for the night till Sir Oliver, who had by this time perfectly recovered his good-humour, voluntarily promised to rescind his determination of returning immediately, and to remain a day or two, and recreate his eyes with a sight of the "Lions" of the University.

CHAPTER XIII.

Quodcunque ostendis mihi SICK incredulus odi.

HON.

—— If ancestry can be in aught believed,
 Descending spirits have conversed with man,
 And told the secrets of the world unknown.

HONK.

—
 A RIDE.—A WALK.—A SONG.—A CONVERSATION.—A DRY
 ARGUMENT.—A WET CONCLUSION.

THE * * * * mail-coach, in which I had secured myself a passage, contained also within its recesses a fat quaker, a pilot, an ailing child, and a woman afflicted with the toothach.

There are times when the happy temperament of our minds, arising from the eager anticipation of some expected enjoyment, or the full gratification of some darling desire, attunes

our whole soul to harmony, and renders us careless and unobservant of those minor annoyances which, in a less joyous mood, would prove no inconsiderable drawback on our felicity; there are also times, when, from sheer intensity of mental suffering, our faculties are so entirely absorbed as to remain unaffected by their presence, and even unconscious of their existence.

Neither of these was at present my lot; the irritable state of my feelings only rendered me the more alive to the miseries of my situation. The worthy member of the Society of Friends, whose ample breadth occupied somewhat more than three-fourths of the seat, was my neighbour, and pinned me close up in one corner of the vehicle, without the possibility of my effecting a change of position even to avoid the direct stream of exhalation from the sailor, who faced me redolent of rum. The latter, having succeeded, that morning, in bringing a valuable cargo into the port of London, was now returning, by a less dangerous element, to the seaport to which he belonged, in order to wait for an-

other job of the same kind, and, previously to occupying his present berth, had stowed in rather more than his usual proportion of grog. The female, who sat by his side, was, as we soon learned from herself, the wife of an eminent cheesemonger in the Borough, going into the country on a visit to her relations; the coachman, doubtless for weighty reasons, had allowed her, although contrary to the strict letter of his regulations, to carry her son on her lap,—“as he was such a very little one,”—and the tortures I had already begun to experience were soon added to in a tenfold degree by her insisting on both the windows being closed to prevent the intrusion of the night-air, which, as she averred, much increased her own complaint, and would besides give her “little darling” cold.

Thus closely wedged, and in an atmosphere to be envied only by the unfortunate Englishmen once confined in the Black-hole at Calcutta, did we “roll along the turnpike road.” The quaker snored, the child cried, its mother groaned, while my friend opposite, apparently

insensible to all the disagreeables which so much annoyed myself, hummed

“Here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling,”

and tendered me his tobacco-box. On my declining to avail myself of his kind offer, in a tone which I laboured to render civil, he ceased his tune, and conveying a respectable portion of “shag” to his own mouth, prepared, with the utmost composure, to accompany my sleeping partner on the right in a most sonorous duet upon the same instrument. — Oh ! how I hated the whole party !

For nearly an hour had I sat thus, enduring the utmost degree of compression which the human frame is capable of bearing, muttering to myself, at every roll of the coach, “curses not loud but deep,” and filling a situation not unlike that of a refractory culprit, whose obstinacy, in refusing to plead, has exposed him to the *peine forte et dure*, a method by which “the statute, in that case made and provided,” till lately directed that an answer should be squeezed out of the most refractory.

My mind was worked up to the highest pitch of irritation, when fortunately the coach stopped, and I perceived, at the door of a solitary public-house by the road-side, a relay with every preparation for changing horses. Eagerly did I avail myself of the opportunity afforded to exchange the confinement I had endured for a state of liberty, if only for a few moments ;— to let down the window, open the door, and spring from the vehicle to the ground, was the work of an instant. Heedless of the discomposure my abrupt secession had occasioned within, I proceeded to pace backwards and forwards by the side of the carriage, every limb revelling in its emancipation.

The night was a lovely one —

“ The silver moon unclouded held her way
Through skies where I could count each little star.”

The air was unusually warm for the time of year, and a gentle breeze gave a tremulous motion to the chequered light of the moonshine falling through the boughs, while its balmy breathings conveyed to the sense all the rich

and fragrant perfume of an English Spring. The silence was broken alone by the plaintive strains of a soft and mellow voice at a little distance, chaunting in a subdued and melancholy tone, which fell grateful on the ear, and harmonized delightfully with the character of the scene. — What a contrast to the exhalations of toddy and tobacco, and the serenade from which I had with so much difficulty escaped !

The peaceful calm which seemed to envelope all nature, animate and inanimate, operated upon my spirits as a holy charm. My roused and angry passions were fast subsiding into a state of placidity, when the spell was rudely broken, and the sacred stillness of the night invaded by the hoarse voices of the guard and ostler, now high in oath respecting some mischance which had occurred to the *matériel* of the coach.

“ My eyes ! here ’s a rig ! — I say, Bill, blow me if this here bar beesn’t just asunder ; — show us a light ! ”

“ Ey, ey, Jem, what say ! — let me see ; where is it ? ”

"*You see!*—you be ——; vot 's the use of your seeing, spooney? show us a light, I tell 'ee!"

Bill obeyed grumbling, and entered the house to procure a candle, with which he soon returned, accompanied by the coachman, who had been discussing a glass of "summut short" within doors, and now added himself to the conclave.

"Broke, do ye say!" cried the latter, advancing the lantern towards the suspected fracture; "so it is, by gum — devilish near asunder too. This now was that c—d old mare coming down the hill; always a-kicking, a wicious old beast — I vonder Master keeps sich warmint!"

"Come, Tom," returned the guard — "it's no use to stand growling here; — Bill, get us a bit o' rope, will 'ee! We must splice her up as well as we can till we gets to B * * *" (the name of the next stage).

At this moment a human head was protruded from each window of the vehicle. The parley without had reached the ears of the personages within, already disturbed by my elopement,

and, although they could not exactly gather the purport of the matter in debate, the manner in which the colloquy was carried on served to induce a suspicion that their own interests were somehow or other implicated in the result of the conference.

“What cheer, messmates!” asked the pilot, “she won’t capsize, will she?” while the sonorous tones of the Quaker were heard from the opposite opening. Surprised into a temporary deviation from his usual mode of delivery, yet still preserving that formality of expression, which not even apprehended danger could subdue, he exclaimed, with unwonted rapidity, “Friend, aileth the leathern conveniency anything!” while the fair dispenser of currants and molasses, losing, or forgetting, her toothach in her alarm, half cried, half screamed, as the tar vacated his berth to give his assistance, “Lauk-a-daisey me! vy vot’s the matter vith the shay, I vonders!”

Finding that the arrangements necessary for the continuing our journey in safety were likely to take up some little time, and aware of the

general correctness of an homely adage, "that too many cooks are apt to spoil the broth," I did not presume to encumber with my inefficient aid those whose experience in the mysteries of splicing, dove-tailing, and all the endless varieties of ligature, so much exceeded my own,—an aid too which, if tendered, would, in all probability, have been rejected with contempt. Still less did I feel inclined to exhibit a supererogatory gallantry in soothing the fears of the apprehensive matron, to whose grinders alarm had already restored the full power of mastication. Aware, as I am, how much my character must suffer in the estimation of my female readers from the confession, I must still honestly avow that I could not find it in my heart to utter one consoling word, or even to assist in quieting the unsavoury "Jacky," who, frightened because he saw his mother frightened, now added his yells to the harmonic combination. Indeed, my only care was to remove myself as far as possible from the sphere of their influence ; so, telling the coachman that I would walk forward till he should overtake

me, I proceeded leisurely on, not a little pleased at the opportunity thus afforded me of enjoying a small portion of so fine an evening, and feeling, I fear, a malignant pleasure at the retributive sufferings now inflicted on some of those who had so long kept me in purgatory.

I had made but little progress in my walk, and was scarcely clear of Johnny's shrill vociferations, when the same musical and plaintive notes which had attracted my attention previously to the discovery of the accident, again caught my ear.

The sounds were evidently at no great distance from me, yet seemed to recede as I approached, till, at length, they appeared to become stationary, since I manifestly gained upon them, and could even distinguish a few of the words which my invisible entertainer was singing to a wild but melancholy air. A turn of the road brought me suddenly near the person who was thus, as it seemed, venting his sorrows and complainings to the ear of night, and calling in the aid of harmony to soothe the grief it cannot entirely tranquillize.

It was the tall figure of a man that now dimly met my view ; he was enveloped in a large cloak, similar to those then used by the military on service, and since in so much request among our students in law and linen-drapery. Its ample folds concealed, in a great measure, the proportions of a form of which only a confused outline could be traced beneath the shadow of a couple of tall trees that skirted the road. I could, however, distinguish that the person, whoever he might be, was of a commanding height, in spite of the unfavourableness of the attitude in which he stood, as he remained, with his back turned towards me, leaning over a gate, and, as I conjectured from the position of his head, gazing earnestly on the brilliant luminary which shone in mild radiance above him.

As I turned the corner of the hedge which had hitherto concealed him from my sight, his song ceased. I paused for a moment as I beheld him, but was again advancing, when the recurrence of the strain checked my footsteps. Apparently absorbed in his own contemplations,

he had not perceived my approach, and I was now sufficiently near to distinguish, with tolerable precision, the following couplets, which he sang to the same wild melody that had at first attracted my attention, still seeming to address himself to the shining planet on which his eyes were fixed.

SONG OF THE NIGHT WANDERER.

- “ There is a low and a lonely vale,
Where the silver moon shines clearly,
And thither I flew to tell my tale
To one whom I loved full dearly ;
In jocund glee I bounded along,
And gaily I laugh'd, and troll'd my song ;
Oh the Moon ! the lovely Moon !
Dearer to me the light o' the Moon
Than the gaudy blaze of the flaunting Noon !
- “ But the days are gone, and years are fled,
Fled too are those hours of brightness ;
And the nut-brown curls that waved on my head,
Are tinged with a silvery whiteness ;
And gone is one whom I loved full well,
And I heard the hollow passing-bell
As I gazed on the Moon, the cold, cold Moon !
Yet dearer still is the light of the Moon,
Oh ! dearer by far than the flaunting Noon !

but with this difference, that, while I rioted (Heaven save the mark !) in all the aristocratical luxury of an inside place, he had contented himself with the humble exaltation, if I may make use of so paradoxical an expression, of the roof. Feeling himself a little cramped, he, too, it seemed, had availed himself of the same opportunity to execute a manœuvre similar to the one I had adopted, having descended from his Olympus the moment the coach stopped.

He now began to express his surprise that it had not overtaken him, a circumstance which I accounted for by mentioning the injury which it had sustained by the fracture of the bar, (the discovery of which his walking on at once had prevented him from knowing,) and thus satisfied him that an apprehension he had begun to entertain, that the coachman might have passed him unobserving and unobserved, was unfounded.

As our conversation continued, I had an opportunity of observing him more narrowly, and was surprised to find that he was by no means

so far advanced in life as some expressions in his song had led me to expect ; he appeared, indeed, to have scarcely passed the prime of manhood, while the firmness of his tread, and the athletic uprightness of his figure, if they wanted the springing elasticity of youth, were at least equally removed from the enervation of age. As he occasionally raised his head, the moonbeams gave additional wanness to a face, the features of which, though bold and masculine, were regular, but of an ashy paleness. He had the air of one who has seen and suffered much ; while the gentlemanly ease of his deportment, and that indescribable something, more easily understood than expressed, which usually marks the manners and demeanour of a military man, announced him a soldier.

Insensibly our conversation from commonplace remarks, took a more interesting turn, and, a casual allusion having drawn forth an explicit avowal of his profession, the discourse not unnaturally diverged to the various changes and chances of a military life, thence to the

different climes and countries through which, in the course of service, it is not unfrequently the soldier's lot to wander.

On all these subjects, I found my companion possessed of such information as evinced that, in his progress through life, he had not hurried on with a careless or unobservant eye; the few sentences with which he had at first replied to my observations, increased in frequency and length, and, as the subject of his profession, its arduous duties, its pleasures and its cares, came more under our review, the deep dejection under which he had originally appeared to labour, softened into an expression of equanimity, at times almost rising into cheerfulness. Every succeeding moment I grew more pleased with the manner and sentiments of my new acquaintance, and heartily should I have regretted the arrival of the vehicle, which was to convey us to the place of our destination, had I not recollected that it rested with myself to decide whether our interview should be thus abruptly cut short or not.

'The rolling of wheels, the pattering of horses'

hoofs, in conjunction with the cracking of the coachman's whip, and the shrill tantivy of the guard's horn, were now heard at a short distance in our rear, and announced the approaching termination of our walk.

I had, as I have said already, fostered an incipient design of emigration from the interior to the exterior of that "infernally machine," and I was abundantly confirmed in my intention, when, on its coming up, and the guard tendering me his arm to assist me in resuming the situation I had quitted, I discovered, through the medium of more senses than one, that a most serious catastrophe had taken place there during my absence.

Master Johnny had, it seems, previously to his introduction into that sepulchre of the living, been tolerably well provisioned for his journey. Independently of a hearty supper on ham and oysters, his pockets had been crammed with a fanciful variety of sweetmeats, and he had been farther furnished forth with a huge plum-cake, which he carried, enveloped in brown paper, on his knees. On this said cake he had com-

menced a formidable attack before we had reached the first milestone out of London, and, as the poor child laboured most heartily in his vocation, by the time we had arrived at the end of the first stage, he had reduced his "Ossa to a wart." An addition, so vast, and composed of such discordant materials, to the load with which she was previously encumbered, was a burthen far heavier than Dame Nature chose to bear; the Goddess turned restive, and the exertion, used by the young gentleman in expressing his tribulation, assisting her endeavours, no sooner did the coach "move on" again, than, by a sudden and vigorous effort, she succeeded in disengaging herself from a considerable portion of the weight which oppressed her, transferring the *onus* to the lap of the Quaker in the opposite corner, to the visible discomposure and defilement of his outward man.

The patience of Friend Penn himself could scarcely have withstood so sudden and so severe a trial, much less that of Hezekiah Brimmer, whom Satan seized the opportunity to

buffet sorely, and, like a cunning fiend as he is, nearly succeeded, more than once, in forcing an ugly word of malediction beyond the aperture of the good man's lips.

As it was, Hezekiah seized the unlucky culprit with the arm of the flesh, and shook him unmercifully ; but this ill-advised measure only served to produce a repetition of the offence, by which, from the different attitude which poor John had been forced to assume, his mamma and the honest tar now became fellow sufferers. As the guard opened the door, the storm within was at its height, and it may be questioned whether a greater confusion of tongues was heard in Babel itself within the same number of square feet.

I did not hesitate a moment as to the course to be pursued, but, bidding the man close the door, sprang up the side of the carriage, and placed myself by my late companion, who had already re-occupied his seat. Half-a-crown to the coachman procured me the loan of a super-numerary surtout, well calculated to keep out the night air, and, thus caparisoned, I felt myself in an absolute Paradise compared with the

Tartarus now immediately below me. If I might judge by the satisfaction he expressed, the arrangement was not less agreeable to my fellow-traveller than to myself; he was still, indeed, at times pensive and abstracted, but his conversation, though of a grave and sombre cast, possessed an undefined charm that continued to amuse and interest me exceedingly.

I know not how it happened that our discourse, which had hitherto been confined principally to the manners, customs, and habits of foreign nations, as compared with, or distinguished from, our own, now turned insensibly upon their superstitions; — The Brownie of Scotland, — the Obi of the Negroes, — the Hungarian Vampire, — the German Rubezahl, and even the now nearly subverted empire of the Fairies in our own country, all came by turns under our review.

It was not till the famous and inexhaustible subject of Ghosts became our theme, that the slightest discordance of opinion existed between us; but, when this celebrated topic came at last upon the tapis, I could not but perceive an

evident and decided reluctance in my companion to enter upon the discussion. The levity, with which I at first treated the notion of a visit from the dead to the living, seemed, I could not imagine why, to displease him ; — his answers to my remarks, if not absolutely petulant, were delivered in a tone by no means consonant with that urbanity and self-possession which he had up to this moment invariably maintained. His constrained replies ended at length in a pause of more than common duration.

In the meantime the singular stillness and brilliancy of the night, the countless myriads of burning stars that gemmed the dark blue heavens above us, the mild and mellow lustre that prevailed, interrupted only by the momentary coruscations of some transient meteor, numbers of which, like stars darting from their spheres, occasionally shed a gleam of surpassing radiance as they winged their way across the expanse,— the finely contrasted shades of the brown woods which clothed on either hand a sort of defile, at the entrance of which we had now arrived,

and up whose steep ascent our conductor allowed his horses to proceed at an easier pace—all,—the whole scene, which developed Nature in her most captivating state of tranquil majesty,—so enchanted me, that, with the subject we had been discussing fresh in my mind, I could not forbear exclaiming in the words of the poet,

“How sweet and solemn is this midnight scene!
At such an hour as this,—in such a spot,—
If ancestry can be in aught believed,
Descending Spirits have conversed with Man,
And told the secrets of the world unknown!”

My companion shuddered as I pronounced the last two lines, and fixed his gaze alternately on the woods that hemmed us in on either side, as if he indeed expected to behold some supernatural visitant issue from their deep recesses.—The wild expression of his countenance was altogether so remarkable, that I could not avoid taking notice of it.

“Really, Sir,” I continued, laughing, “I could almost persuade myself that you had indeed resolved to give that credence to our worthy ancestors on this formidable subject,

which their unbelieving posterity seem determined to refuse them."

"And why should I not?" returned he, in a voice serious even to sadness, and betraying, as I imagined, some slight token of displeasure; "what is there so absurd in the idea that the disembodied spirit should yet desire to linger among the scenes it has delighted in, or joy to watch over and protect the happiness of those whom it has loved?"

"Absurd?—nay,—I do not go the length of pronouncing the idea absurd;—the theory, on the contrary, is a mighty pretty one, and at times I am almost tempted to regret that it rests on so unsubstantial a foundation. For my own part I should desire nothing better than to discover the Ghost of some good-natured Grandmother occasionally at my elbow, with sage hints for the better conducting of my life and manners;—or some maiden Aunt, of a dozen generations standing, extending her long and bony finger to intimate where I might replenish an exhausted exchequer by the discovery of some recondite pot of money."—

The voice of my companion assumed additional sternness as he replied—"These, and silly tales like these, the foolish inventions of boys and idiots, the babblings of nurses, and the visionary dreams of mercenary blockheads, eager in believing what they earnestly wish for—these they are that have thrown suspicion on the actual visits of immortal beings, undertaken for far higher purposes, and with far nobler designs than the pointing out a few ounces of sordid dross, or with the still more contemptible view of exciting causeless terror in beings so infinitely below their purified nature.—These are the tales which the careless and the vain mix up, and associate in their imagination, with recorded facts of a more dignified description,—facts to the authenticity of which some of the wisest and best of men have borne testimony in all ages of the world."

"I am fully aware," rejoined I, "that many of the narratives you allude to appear to rest upon no mean authority; that Plutarch, for instance, has given us several, while, in more modern times, the comprehensive mind of that 'Giant

in intellect,' our own Johnson, was deeply imbued with a similar persuasion ; yet, nevertheless, I cannot help imputing the whole system, which has obtained from the darker ages down to our more enlightened days, either to successful imposture, or to the effects of a strong imagination operating upon weak nerves. That many of these traditionary anecdotes were firmly believed by the persons who have handed them down, and even by some who were actors in the scenes described, I entertain no doubt ; still I am not a whit the nearer giving my assent to the actual appearance of any one spectre, from that of Cæsar down to the scarcely less celebrated one of Sir George Villiers, or Mrs. Veal with her ' rustling silk gown.' "

" And on what is this disbelief founded ?— You doubtless admit that Providence governs the world by general laws ; what is there, then, ridiculous in supposing that those laws may be occasionally dispensed with—if, indeed, they can be said to be dispensed with at all ; for we positively know nothing of their constitutions,—when the high and inscrutable purposes of Hea-

ven require it?—when the detection of secret guilt, or the punishment of open villany, demand its interference!”

“ Well,” cried I, in the same tone which I had maintained throughout the whole conversation, “ on occasions of such moment as those to which you allude, still less should I wish to deny myself to any deceased gentleman or lady who might think proper to favour me with a call. The redressing of wrong and the re-establishing of right is a glorious task, and, with a Ghost to back one, and take all the responsibility upon itself, must be especially delightful ;—I really could almost wish I might be selected by some aërial avenger for so very respectable an office.

“ Now, Heaven in its mercy forbid !” exclaimed he, with a wild energy that made me start,—then clasping his hands, which still quivered with some strong emotion,—“ You know not what you are asking ;—rash and unthinking young man, bitterly would you rue the hour should your mad wish be granted !”

His whole frame shook with agitation,—his

eyes glistened in the moonlight with an unnatural brightness, and his tones sank into even sepulchral hoarseness, as he continued—"No! Heaven forbid that another wretch should suffer the torments which have been mine since first this dreadful commission was enjoined me!"

He paused, and, unclasping his hands, covered with them the whole of his countenance.

During the latter part of his ejaculation he had appeared to have become totally unconscious of my presence; and the strange import of the words he had used, together with the violent agitation which assailed him, combined to give strength to an opinion I had before begun to form, that the intellects of my new acquaintance were, on this point at least, not altogether unclouded. True, that on every other subject his conversation had been of a superior description;—that he had diffused, with no sparing hand, much valuable information, chastened by a correctness of thinking, a genuine taste and elegance of expression, that evinced the richness and cultivation of his mind: still I was quite aware that among the melancholy victims

of mental aberration, such circumstances are by no means uncommon; that, in numerous instances, the fatal malady lies dormant and unsuspected, till some one pre-conceived and rooted idea, which has warped the imagination, is accidentally called into play, and succeeds, for a time, in driving reason from her throne.

Such, I now began to be apprehensive, might be the unhappy condition of my fellow-traveller, when his emotion having, at length, in some degree subsided, I ventured to direct his attention to the faint streak of golden light that now marked the extremity of the horizon, as the grey tints of morning succeeded the darker shadows of a night fast hastening to its close.

But my hopes of thus diverting his thoughts from what, I felt convinced, was a subject of pain and distress to him, proved abortive. In vain did I point out to his observation the beauties of the surrounding landscape, which every moment rendered more distinct;—in vain did the mounting skylark welcome with his cheerful notes the first beam of the rising sun, that glittered on his little breast, while all below lay

yet unconscious of its cheering influence ;—in vain did vegetation, redolent of sweetness, convey to the charmed sense the choicest perfume ; —wrapt in a melancholy gloom, he appeared dead to the charms of Nature that surrounded him, while the few replies, which I at times succeeded in eliciting, were so cold and constrained, and were pronounced with an air so *distrain*, that I at length ceased to importune him by remarks, which only seemed to annoy him, and, turning my thoughts inward for the remainder of the journey, became insensibly almost as abstracted as himself.

My cogitations, it must be confessed, were by no means of an agreeable nature. Wounded in every feeling by the unaccountable conduct of Lord Manningham, I would have given worlds for power to banish him and his lovely daughter from my recollection, and to have “ left them to their pride ;” but this I found myself utterly incapable of performing ; my chains were too securely riveted to be so easily shaken off ; I loved with all the intensity of a young and first passion ; and as I recalled to mind the pleasing

thought that she at least had given me no offence, hope failed not to whisper that the behaviour of her father,—if indeed it had ever reached her knowledge,—must be viewed by her with the same disapprobation as it was by myself.

Youth is naturally vain and sanguine, and I flattered myself that the time spent in her company at the theatre had not been thrown away,—though what on earth could have taken her into that part of it, so accompanied, was a mystery beyond my power to solve.—If I had read the language of her expressive eyes aright, the *penchant* had been reciprocal; and, as this delightful idea took possession of my imagination, the remembrance of his lordship's strange harshness comparatively faded from my mind. I began to rack my invention to furnish excuses for his conduct; an eager desire laid hold upon me to unravel the mistake, which I became more and more convinced must have taken place, and to receive the apologies which, at the *dénouement*, he would undoubtedly tender to my acceptance with no small confusion of face.

I was roused from my reverie by a circumstance which threatened utterly to subvert all my castle-building in the very outset ; this was no other than the overturning of the coach, and my consequent descent in a narrow but rapid stream, that ran beneath a bridge, on the centre of which we were when the accident occurred.

What was the immediate cause of our sudden descent is more than I am able to state ; —whether the tackling and cordage, so plentifully lavished by “Bill,” upon the fractured splinter-bar, had given way, in spite of all the combined science of himself and honest Jack,—or whether any other part of the machinery had been equally unsound, I cannot say ; —all I know is, that I found myself in a moment up to my neck in the river.

Of all sublunary applications there is, perhaps, not one which possesses greater efficacy in a love case than that of a good sousing in cold water ; —if its effects fail to be permanent, they at least give the fit a complete check for the time ; and in cases where a radical cure is out of the question, that is no trifling point gained.

—Heaven is my witness—I confess it with shame—that for a full hour after my ducking, I thought no more of Amelia Stafford than I did of the Lady Godiva.

Notwithstanding the impediment thrown in my way by my borrowed “Upper Benjamin,” I was not long in regaining the bank. — The coachman I found already upon his legs: he had fallen against the parapet of the bridge, which, at the expense of a pretty severe bruise, had prevented his going over. The same parapet had also saved the carriage itself from being dashed upon the ground: it rested against its edge; and though the shock was severe, the occupants of the interior of the coach were, through this fortunate interposition, much more alarmed than injured. They were relieved from the awkwardness of their recumbent position, without much difficulty, by the assistance of the guard, who, clinging to the iron-work of his seat, had escaped being thrown off at all.

It was not till the lapse of a few seconds had enabled me to recover from the confusion I had fallen into from the united effects of the tumble,

and of the quantity of cold water which I had unwillingly swallowed, that I missed my companion.

He was not on the bridge ;—he was nowhere to be seen.—I rushed back to the spot where I had contrived to scramble out of the water, and, as I cast a hurried glance down the river, saw one of his arms rise above the surface, at some distance down the current, which was bearing him rapidly away.

I flew rather than ran along the bank, till I arrived opposite the spot where I could behold him faintly struggling to disencumber himself of the cloak, which impeded all his efforts, and would have reduced him, in a very few minutes more, to a similar condition with those immaterial beings for whose “ revisiting the glimpees of the moon ” he had shown himself so sturdy a stickler. If, however, his cloak had hitherto occasioned his danger, it now served as an instrument of release from his perilous position, as the firm grasp which I was enabled to take of it conduced not a little to his preservation.

When I had succeeded in dragging him up

the bank, he was so completely exhausted as to be incapable of supporting himself, and indeed was scarcely sensible of his situation ; but by degrees his recollection, as well as some portion of his energy, returned, and he was at length able, with the assistance of my arm, to regain the high-road.

The place where this disaster had befallen us was fortunately just at the entrance of a considerable village, the inhabitants of which had, from no great distance, witnessed our mishap, and now came running down to offer their aid, and ask questions. These, in our present dripping condition, I felt very little inclined to answer ; so, cutting short a long string of interrogatories, such as " Whether the gentleman was much hurt ? " — " Whether we had been in the water ? " — a fact no human looker-on could possibly doubt for an instant,—and others of a similar cast, I proceeded, with as much expedition as the weakened state of my *protégé* would admit, to where a tall sign-post exposed to view the Kit-Cat effigy of a gentleman with an iron cuirass and a bald head, which the neigh-

bourhood had agreed, in courtesy to the landlord, to consider a striking likeness of the Marquis of Granby.—

“ Whoe’er has travell’d life’s dull round,
Where’er his various course has been,
May sigh to think how oft he found
His warmest welcome at an inn ! ”

So says Shenstone ; and for my own part, I am little inclined to dispute the truth of the Poet’s axiom. On this occasion, especially, the round and ruby-coloured face of our good-humoured landlady, Mrs. Blenkinsop, already shining with all the radiance of a well-scrubbed mahogany table, exhibited tenfold lustre as she welcomed us into a snug little room behind the bar.

This “ shady, blest retreat ” was furnished with a variety of huge case-bottles, that promised much of comfort, and disclosed besides to our enraptured gaze the still more cheering prospect of a blazing fire — to persons in our predicament, perhaps, the greatest desideratum on earth.

It was in vain that I requested my companion to retire to bed ; nor were the assurances

of Mrs. Blenkinsop that "her beds were well aired, and good enough for a lord to lie on," of more avail : he persisted in his refusal, declaring that a tumbler of mulled port, and a change of dress, were all that was requisite to the restoration of his comfort.—I thought otherwise ; but he was deaf to persuasion, and, like most obstinate people, carried his point. The wine, by our landlady's assistance, was soon procured ; and under the same auspices a lad was despatched to the fractured vehicle for our baggage.

The Marquis of Granby, whose hospitable walls now afforded us an asylum, was, I well knew, in point of distance, scarcely more than twelve miles from Underdown, and as, now that the disarrangement which my person had undergone, inside as well as out, was tolerably rectified, I found myself very little, if at all, the worse for my aquatic adventure, I requested mine hostess, who was evidently Lady of the ascendant, to inform me if her hotel, among its other excellences, could afford the luxury of a post-chaise.

In fact, I did not feel by any means inclined to trust my neck farther to a conveyance organized of such frail materials as woful experience had convinced me the one from which I had so nearly met the fate of Phaeton, was composed of; nor should I have repeated the experiment, even had the delay I must have submitted to during the necessary repairs been out of the question. With a multiplicity of courtesies, each succeeding one lower than the former, the good-natured little woman assured me that I could be accommodated with "a very elegant" one, the unoccupied corner of which I frankly offered to my new acquaintance, who was, I found, as desirous as myself of proceeding with all convenient despatch. At the same time I assured him, that if the urgency of his affairs would allow him to accept the hospitality of the Hall, I could venture, in the absence of my worthy Uncle, its proprietor, to assure him a cordial welcome from my mother, adding, with more of levity than caution, that "a renowned ancestor of mine, one Sir Roger de Bullwinkle, who was said nightly to perambulate the man-

sion armed cap-a-pie, might possibly furnish him with an additional argument in favour of his theory of Ghosts and Goblins."

The words had hardly escaped my lips when the change in his countenance showed me that I had been wrong in hazarding this ill-timed pleasantry. — When I named the redoubted Roger, he recoiled with a shuddering earnestness, as if he had been about to tread upon a viper ; and his eyes gleamed with an expression almost amounting to ferocity. His nether lip quivered with suppressed emotion, and his voice faltered, as, after a brief pause, he indistinctly declined a proposal which, from the smile that had lit up his countenance at its commencement, I had made myself certain he would have accepted.

Heartily vexed with myself at my want of consideration, I apologized for the allusion, and again pressed him to accompany me. He continued, however, firm in his refusal, while he shook his head mournfully, and, as it now seemed to me, "more in sorrow than in anger," telling me that he began to fear he had indeed

overrated his strength when he proposed continuing his journey so soon, — that he should therefore give up the idea, and seek such repose as his pillow might afford him.”

I was not less pleased than surprised at this determination, as I really thought a good warm bed and medical attendance most fitting, by far, for a person who had suffered from remaining in the water so long as he had done; I no longer therefore endeavoured to shake his resolution, but contented myself with pressing him earnestly to favour me with a visit before he quitted that part of the country.

With an air and look solemn even to dejection, he promised that he “*would* see me again;” and, taking up my valise which I had thrown carelessly upon the table, handed it to the multifarious personage who, in the several capacities of boots, waiter, ostler, and occasionally chambermaid, was minister for the home department at the Granby’s Head.

Before he altogether relinquished it to the grasp of the aforesaid functionary, his eye rested upon the brass-plate which occupied its centre.

"Charles Stafford, Esq." read he.—"That, then, is the name of my preserver!"

"Of your fellow-passenger," returned I, as, giving up the valise to the man who placed it in the chaise, he took my hand — "Of your fellow-passenger, and of one who hopes soon to see you perfectly recovered from the effects of a ducking which he would have been glad to have prevented altogether."

I had one foot upon the step of the chaise,—Mister Boots was holding open the door and gazing on me with glances, sharpened by expectation — my mysterious companion wrung my hand strongly,—"Adieu!" uttered he in an agitated tone,—*"adieu! young gentleman, and may Heaven grant that you may never have reason to curse bitterly the hour in which you drew me from the stream!"*——

He turned abruptly from me, and the post-boy, cracking his whip, set off in a canter towards Underdown, before I had half recovered from the surprise which my new friend's strange adjuration had thrown me into.

CHAPTER XIV.

Home ! Home !—Sweet, sweet Home !
There's no place like Ho-ome !
There's no place like Home !

BISHOP.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ?
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
That weighs upon the heart ?

Macbeth in trouble.

A RETURN.—AN INVALID.—A SNUBBING.—A CHARGE.—A
CALLING IN.—A CALLING OUT.

LITTLE more than an hour had elapsed when the tall chimneys of the Hall,—which, like most of those belonging to buildings of the same era, towered high above its slanting roofs and gable ends,—appeared, rising over the summits of the lofty trees that embosomed the

edifice, and giving to it, when viewed from a distance, almost the air of a castellated mansion.

There is a something in the return to our home, however short the period of our absence from it may have been, which always produces a kindly and complacent feeling in our bosoms ; and this feeling acquires tenfold strength, when we know that the roof we are revisiting contains beneath it hearts which will throb at our arrival with sensations responsive to our own. In spite of the unpleasant and irritating circumstances which had occasioned my unexpected return, I could not help experiencing this genial glow, as the chaise, issuing from the long avenue of sturdy oaks,—the scene of my Cousin Nicholas's early achievements in the art of horsemanship,—drew up to the steps which led to the antique portal, over whose high and pointed arch the "three golden fetterlocks" of the Bullwinkles stood forth in strong relief.

The current of my ideas underwent a sudden and immediate revulsion as the venerable butler presented himself to receive me. The subdued

alacrity, the sober energy of manner, with which this ancient retainer of the family was wont to welcome home any of its members, had sunk into an appearance of sadness and depression. As I hastily sprang past the inferior domestic who opened the chaise-door for me, I saw at once that some calamity was impending over the house, and had occasioned this unwonted gravity in the most attached of its dependents.—Sir Oliver was absent ;—my mother then was ill !—was dead !

A cold shudder ran through my veins as the dreadful idea presented itself to my imagination, and I experienced a degree of relief, amounting to thankfulness, when I found that my fears were not verified in their fullest extent, although but too sufficient reason remained for apprehension.

Mrs. Stafford had indeed been seized with sudden indisposition a few days before my arrival, on perusing a letter which she had received from London, the contents of which had evidently created in her no slight degree of agitation.

Her illness had at first excited much alarm, but, as it was now hoped, had taken a favourable turn. She had expressed a strong desire to see her son, and had requested that I might be summoned as soon as possible. An express had accordingly been got ready, but was countermanded afterwards by her own positive orders, since which she had sunk into a kind of apathetic lethargy, the more unaccountable, inasmuch as the first approaches of her disorder had been attended by symptoms of so different and so much more violent a nature.

Such was the account imparted to me by Jennings as I entered the vestibule, and I had no reason either to doubt the accuracy of his intelligence, or to be for one moment at a loss to divine the cause which had produced so lamentable an effect.

I have already said, that a strong affection for my mother was one of the most rooted principles of my nature ; it was entwined with the very fibres of my heart ; and a degree of bitterness, greater than I had supposed it possible for any circumstance to have originated in my mind

towards a human being, now swelled my bosom against Lord Manningham, and almost rose to my lips in curses.

That "the letter," the perusal of which had thus affected my mother, was of his lordship's inditing, I could not entertain a doubt. That it contained some tale—a tale so dreadful to a fond parent's ear—of a loved son's disgrace, was still less to be questioned;—and as the events of the week gone by, which Miss Stafford's beauty had partly succeeded in banishing from my mind, now rushed in irresistible strength upon my recollection, deeply as I felt the indignity I had sustained, a thousand times more deeply did I resent the sufferings inflicted by it upon my beloved parent.

The good old Jennings, who observed the emotion I so plainly exhibited, opened the door of the breakfast parlour, and respectfully followed me into it. He seemed affected by my distress; nevertheless, through the habitual deference which the faithful fellow preserved towards me, I could not but perceive a degree of constraint, and a reserve of manner, which told me, quite as

plainly as words could have done, that, in his opinion, my own conduct had drawn down this visitation upon me, and that to it only had I to look for a solution of the cause of my mother's indisposition.

With this man I had been a favourite from a child. From the first hour in which I had been introduced at the Hall, Jennings had exhibited, in a thousand ways, the preference with which he had distinguished me above his young master—a preference which grew only the more obvious as we advanced in years, and which, doubtless, derived its origin from the love and respect he, in common with all the old domestics, had ever entertained for my mother, whose secession from her paternal roof they had seen with feelings of regret, little alleviated by the conduct of her successor, Lady Nelly. Of all the servants of the family who had witnessed her abdication, Jennings alone had remained to hail her re-establishment, and had, in fact, from his known and tried attachment, been considered, both by her and myself, rather in the

light of an humble friend than of a common menial.

Conscious as I was of the falsehood of the charge which his sorrowful and penetrating look seemed to impute to me, my spirit rose against the fancied accusation, and with an air of infinitely greater *hauteur* than I had ever before exhibited towards him, or any other domestic, I ordered him to let Mrs. Stafford be informed of my arrival, and of my wish to be admitted immediately to her presence.

“ Ah, Master Charles ! ” replied the old man, mournfully shaking his hoary head as he retired, while an unbidden tear seemed starting from his eye,—“ But I shall do your bidding, Sir.”—

He closed the door slowly, and, as I thought, reluctantly, behind him ;—a pang of self-disapprobation seized upon me as it shut him from my view, and I half moved forward to retract my petulance, and dismiss him with a kindlier greeting. The thought unavoidably occurred, why did I feel offended with him ?—Whence arose that mild dejection of his furrowed coun-

tenance which I had construed into unmerited upbraiding?—Whence but from the regard he bore to my mother, and—why should I deny it?—to myself? Still the consciousness that it *was* unmerited restrained me, and checked the impulse which inclined me to follow him.

In a few minutes, which were passed by me in the utmost anxiety, and which appeared to my impatience prolonged to as many hours, he returned.—

“ Mrs. Stafford was asleep.”

Unable to remain longer by myself in such an annoying state of suspense, I walked hastily towards the staircase, extending my hand to Jennings as I passed. The old man took it reverently, and would have raised it to his lips, but, with a cordial pressure that bespoke my compunction for having treated him with unwonted harshness, I released it from his grasp, and directed my steps to the apartment of my mother.

A silence, still and solemn as that of death, reigned throughout the room; while the half-closed shutters, and shadowing curtains that

admitted but a few faint rays of light, contributed not a little to the gloom of the scene.

I advanced to the foot of the bed, and gazed upon my mother. She was wrapped in slumber, but her sleep seemed, ever and anon, disturbed; and the frequent contraction of her brow, as a deep-drawn sigh, or a few broken and unconnected words, occasionally escaped her, announced that all was not at peace within. —At such moments her favourite attendant Martha, who with Miss Pyefinch watched her pillow on opposite sides, would rise and look anxiously at her pale countenance, the snowy hue of which was only invaded by a small spot of vivid red that marked the centre of each cheek, and exhibited to the view a hectic glow as dangerous as it was beautiful. But her affectionate gaze was met by no answering glance; my mother still reposed, if repose that could be called, when the restless and variable expression of her features showed that her mind, at least, was far from enjoying tranquillity. She was indeed much altered since I had seen her last, and I trembled with newly awakened ap-

prehension as the idea took possession of me, that a short, a very short period might deprive me of my only parent.

Finding it impossible to suppress my emotion, and warned, by the impressive gestures of her attendants, that the uncontrolled ebullition of my feelings might disturb and arouse her, I quitted the room as silently as I had entered it, but with a heavy heart. Miss Pyefinch followed, and in her way endeavoured to offer me consolation. Notwithstanding her eccentricity, and some other points in her character which might perhaps have been altered to advantage, she was not a bad-hearted woman in the main ; I verily believe she participated in the sorrow into which she beheld me plunged, and would have done anything in her power to have alleviated it ; but her endeavours were far better in the intent than the execution, and at length I, not without difficulty, succeeded in persuading her to leave me to myself, after she had given me all the information in her power to communicate respecting the commencement of this alarming accession to my mother's malady ; her

information, however, amounted to little more than I had previously gathered from the relation of the honest Jennings.

After more than half an hour, spent in a state, the irksomeness of which may be easily imagined, I was favoured with a communication from Dr. Drench, who had arrived to visit his patient. The information he gave me contributed not a little to reassure me, as he said he found her much better than from her appearance at his last visit he had dared to anticipate. She had awakened from her slumber while he was in the room, and had evidently derived much benefit and refreshment from it; the fever, which had heretofore raged in her veins, had undergone a material reduction. Still he recommended that the greatest caution should be observed to prevent anything from reaching her which might at all tend to produce a return of the agitation which had before so sensibly affected her, and even advised that the circumstance of my having arrived should, for the present at least, be kept from her knowledge. To this arrangement, however, I positively refused

my consent, and, finding that my perseverance (obstinacy, he called it) was not to be overcome, he at last yielded, though with a very bad grace, and a stipulation that, if it must be so, the communication should at all events be made by himself, while the interview should terminate the moment he should pronounce it necessary.

To this proposal I unhesitatingly assented, and saw him depart to execute his self-imposed commission, with a much greater degree of satisfaction than a few short minutes since I had thought it possible for me to experience.

To do the worthy dispenser of chemicals and galenicals justice, he acquitted himself of his task with much ability, and was pleased to find, when he had imparted his news in a manner as little abrupt as might be, that his patient seemed to derive much satisfaction from the intelligence, and even intimated a desire that I should be at once conducted to her presence.

For the first time in our lives my mother received me with a cold look and an averted eye. —I sensibly felt her displeasure, but refrained

from noticing it, lest the conversation, which my so doing would inevitably lead to, should transgress the bounds prescribed by the doctor.

Our interview, thus restricted, was brief, and unsatisfactory to both parties; but before I quitted the room, as I affectionately kissed her cheek — a salute which she received, but condescended not to return — I could not forbear whispering that I had no doubt of being able to convince her that my conduct had been shamefully misrepresented, whenever she should be sufficiently recovered to listen to my vindication. Tears filled her eyes as she shook her head doubtingly, but I was delighted to find that she could not refrain from giving the hand that had taken hers a half-reluctant pressure,—when Drench, who was narrowly watching us, suspecting that we were infringing upon the terms on which he had allowed my introduction to the sick-room, broke in abruptly, and put an end to the conference by hurrying me along with him down stairs.

Impatient and anxious as I naturally was to ascertain the specific nature of the faults laid

to my charge, I was compelled for the present to repress my curiosity, as Mrs. Stafford had not communicated the contents of the letter she had received to any one, although, from the language which had unwittingly escaped her, no one entertained the slightest doubt that it contained some story of my delinquency or disgrace. She had never parted with it, but, as I learned on inquiry from Miss Kitty, it still rested beneath her pillow, from which situation she had directed that it should not be removed.

On the following morning I rose early, and heard with delight that she had passed a much more tranquil night than she had hitherto done since her seizure ; but my request to be admitted to see her was met by a decided negative from herself, until I should have perused a letter which she had commissioned Miss Pyefinch to deliver to me. The appearance of the packet, which was enclosed in a sealed envelope, and addressed to me in her own handwriting, satisfied me that it contained the mischievous epistle which had occasioned her illness. I was not mistaken ; the letter was, moreover, as I

had rightly anticipated, from Lord Manningham, and ran as follows :—

“ My dear Sister,—It is with no common feelings that I address you upon a subject as painful to me as I know it will be distressing to yourself; nor is it without the greatest reluctance that I find myself compelled to inflict upon a parent’s heart so severe a wound as that which cannot but be caused by the story of the disgraceful conduct of a son. When I add that my own hopes are blighted, and the long-cherished project nearest my heart is, by the same conduct, frustrated and destroyed, I need scarcely say that my grief and disappointment are hardly inferior to your own.

“ From that fatal moment when my Amelia became the sole object left to which I could direct my parental affection, it was my most fervent wish that the son of my lamented Charles might be the person to secure her that happiness which I would not allow myself to doubt he would be found worthy to share; and I had pictured to myself the pleas-

ing prospect of witnessing their felicity, and growing old amidst the children of two beings the nearest and dearest to me in the world ;— judge then of my disappointment when I find myself compelled to renounce this first object of my hopes and prayers, while the painful conviction is forced upon me, that to secure the happiness of my child I must seek in some other family for that worth, integrity, and honour which I had fondly flattered myself I should have discovered in my own.

“ On my arrival in this country I addressed, as you cannot but remember, a letter to yourself, in which I candidly stated my wishes, and was highly gratified to find that yours so entirely coincided with them. If, on the subsequent visit of my nephew, I was not so much struck with the graces of his figure as, from your truly maternal description, I had expected to be, mere personal advantages,— though I would not be thought to undervalue them,— weigh so little with me, that, had his mental qualifications but stood the test, I could gladly have compounded for a much smaller share of

external grace than a mother's partiality would naturally invest him with.—But this, I lament to say, has not been the case.

“At their first interview in Grosvenor Square, I perceived that my daughter and my nephew were by no means such absolute strangers to each other as I had imagined; though I am fully persuaded that Amelia, at least, was not aware of their affinity when chance threw them into each other's company at one of the theatres.

“It was not without considerable surprise as well as displeasure, I now learned that during the time which on my first arrival I had inevitably dedicated to the discharge of official duties, my daughter, weary of a solitude to which she was unaccustomed, and dotingly fond of music, had prevailed upon Wilkinson, whose affection, I verily believe, could deny her nothing, to take advantage of my unavoidable absence at the Colonial Office, and to accompany her to hear an oratorio *incog*. This mad-brained plan a sister of the latter, who resides somewhere about St. James's, enabled her to execute, without even my servants suspecting that they

had anything in view beyond a visit to Mrs. Morgan.

“On this occasion, it seems, Amelia first encountered her cousin, who then received, as he asserted, so strong an impression as to be absolutely overwhelmed with joy, when, on calling to present your introductory letter, he discovered his unknown charmer in his cousin. Of the truth of this his statement, however, I could not help having my doubts, and was indeed soon convinced that, prior to his presenting himself at my house, he was perfectly aware of her identity with the lady whom he had so casually encountered.

“This little piece of disingenuousness certainly did not tend to raise him in my estimation ; still, though far from pleased with any part of the transaction, I saw nothing absolutely wrong in the thoughtless frolic, and was more disposed to blame Wilkinson than anybody else, as she ought to have known better than to indulge Amelia in such a freak.

“The second day after his arrival I had resolved to dedicate to the study of my young

relative's character, and, aware that the real disposition is usually most apt to exhibit itself in society, invited a few friends, whose refined manners, and enlightened conversation were calculated to draw forth any hidden resources of intellect, natural or acquired, which diffidence in the probationer, or lack of opportunity from the absence of mental collision, might suffer to remain concealed. Heartily did I repent the experiment, and deeply indeed did I blush for my *protégé*, on hearing him noisily and rudely interrupt every subject broached, by boisterous and vulgar jokes, which increased in frequency and coarseness as the inebriety, into which he was fast plunging, became more conspicuous. My interference, when I was at last compelled to employ it, he seemed much inclined to set at defiance; and it was with difficulty that I could prevent his exhibiting himself in so disgraceful a condition to my daughter.

"I will not enlarge upon the mortification I experienced at having it witnessed by my friends.

"The following morning — or rather noon,

for till that hour did the effects of the orgies of the preceding evening confine him to his chamber — I requested his attendance in my study, and remonstrating with him on his behaviour, forcibly perhaps, but, I trust, without harshness, I stated at the same time most unequivocally my resolution never to bestow my daughter on a drunkard.—He apologized with a very bad grace, and with much more, as I thought, of sullenness than penitence, when I left him alone with Amelia, while I acquitted myself of an indispensable engagement.

“ I will not, my dearest sister, unnecessarily aggravate your distress by dwelling on the faults and follies which every succeeding hour developed during the whole of his short visit ; it will be sufficient to inform you, that — rightly conjecturing, as I imagine, from the disapprobation which I now strongly and repeatedly expressed of his conduct, that my intentions in his favour had undergone a material alteration, —he endeavoured to ascertain whether Amelia might not prove more accessible, and not only strove to prevail on her to consent to an elope-

ment, but on her indignant refusal, actually formed a plan, as silly in conception as atrocious in design, for carrying her off to Scotland, with, or without, her inclination —”

—I had read thus far in my uncle’s long epistle, with much such sensations as a man experiences when, half-awakened from a confused and heterogeneous dream, he feels his faculties bewildered with the strange images yet before his eyes, and is scarcely conscious even of his own identity: but if thus far the letter were calculated to amaze and confound, the remainder was even still more inexplicable.—Lord Manningham proceeded thus :

“ In pursuance of this ridiculous scheme, he induced her to accompany him for a short drive in a curriele which I had placed at his disposal, attended only by a single groom newly taken into my service ;—this man he had, for pecuniary considerations no doubt, contrived to attach to his interests.

“ They took the North road, but it was not till some time after they had surmounted Highgate Hill that my daughter entertained any sus-

picion of his intention. His declining to comply with her request that he would return, and the sudden absence of the servant who, on some trivial pretence, had ridden forward, now first insinuated into her mind an apprehension of treachery. By no means intimidated, however, and finding all resistance for the present useless, she remained perfectly passive, and quietly listened to the strange farrago of nonsense with which her companion now thought proper to entertain her. His vows and protestations, &c. were couched in the highest style of the mock heroic; he attributed his conduct to the overwhelming force of his affection, and his despair of securing my consent to their immediate union, adding that the violence of his passion would brook no long delay, and expressing his confidence that, their marriage once completed, my forgiveness of this rash step would be the almost immediate consequence. — With these and similar rhapsodies, alternately threatening and entreating, he conveyed her as far as St. Alban's, where at the inn door she perceived James, the servant who had preceded them, in conversation

with a couple of post-boys, who stood ready to mount their horses, four of which were harnessed to a hack chaise.

“ Mr. Stafford assisted my Amelia to alight, and was preparing to accompany her into the house, when his intention was apparently altered by some communication which his worthy coadjutor whispered in his ear ; he paused and led the way directly to the chaise, the door of which he in an authoritative tone commanded the drivers to open.

“ But secret as James’s hint was intended to be, a sound most grateful to her ear had caught the attention of Amelia, and the words “ Major Fortescue in the house,” distinctly heard, in spite of the lowered voice in which they were pronounced, decided her mode of proceeding.—

Suddenly disengaging her arm from that of her would-be bridegroom, she darted into the passage, calling aloud on the name of him who would, as she well knew, prove both an efficient and respectable protector. Her appeal was not unheard ; a door opened, and the dear friend who, but for an event too mournful for me to

my domestics; the door, on that occasion, was ajar, and as I approached I had distinctly heard him offering money to the servant in attendance on him, whom I now recollect to have been this very James, though what his object was I could not then distinguish. The impression upon my mind at the time was, that he was endeavouring to purchase silence as to the extent of his intoxication; I now think differently, and am persuaded that he was even then tampering with his fidelity, in the hope of securing so trustworthy an aide-de-camp.

“ This, my dearest Sister, is the unpleasant intelligence I have been compelled to communicate; and I trust that in relinquishing, as I now reluctantly do, all hope of a nearer connexion being formed between us, you will do me the justice to believe, that necessity alone dictates my resolution, and prevents my risking the temporal,—perhaps the eternal,—interests of my only child, upon the precarious tenure of the affection of a young man, who, if, as I would hope may be the case, his heart be not utterly depraved, is yet so loose and un-

settled in his principles, as to render futile all hopes of his alliance being conducive to the happiness of either party.

“As the son of my dear Charles, and the future—I much fear, unworthy—representative of the family, should he hereafter become convinced of his errors, and, as added years bring added wisdom, endeavour to retrace his footsteps in the deplorable path which he seems to be now treading, my countenance, influence, and purse, shall not be wanting to forward his views, and to secure him a reception in society befitting his birth, and the rank he may be destined to fill;—as a son-in-law I never can receive him. I will not add to the length of a letter, already so prolix, by any farther expressions of regret for the line of conduct I am compelled to adopt, nor outrage your maternal feelings by attempting to offer a consolation, which time, and the amended manners of your son, can alone bestow. Your heart, I doubt not, will be wrung by this narrative; believe me, mine is scarcely less so. Judge of my feelings by your own.

“I inclose a ring which Mr. Stafford forced

upon my daughter's finger during his courtship—if such it may be called—and which, as he informed her, contains a lock of his own hair.

“ Adieu, my dear Sister !—deeply as I must lament this unfortunate termination to our mutual hopes, believe that I shall always entertain towards yourself the strongest sentiments of sympathy and regard, and continue to be ever your affectionate brother, MANNINGHAM.”

Some time elapsed after the perusal of this extraordinary letter, ere I could arrange my ideas sufficiently to form anything like an opinion upon its contents. I almost doubted if I were awake, the whole affair seemed so like an unpleasant dream.—Had I indeed been guilty of the absurd and ridiculous conduct imputed to me ! Reason and reflection told me the contrary.—Was the whole story then an invention of Lord Manningham ! His rank, his character, his well-known probity and honour, forbade the supposition.—Had he been imposed upon by some rascally swindler, assuming my name to defraud him of his daughter and her rich

inheritance!—It was difficult to believe that human audacity could soar to such a pitch, and yet this seemed the only rational solution to the mysteries which beset me on all sides. The recollection of my mother's letter, too,—of that letter so unaccountably lost and never recovered, seemed to give a colour to this mode of accounting for the occurrences said to have taken place; and a thousand times did I curse my own carelessness which alone could have put it in the power of any individual, however crafty, to carry on so impudent an imposition.

The more I revolved the matter in my mind, after reading Lord Manningham's letter carefully over again, the more convinced I became that this must be indeed the fact, and my thoughts naturally began to turn on the perpetrator!—Who could he be?—Some one well versed in our family history, beyond all question, or he would at once have stood detected;—then, too, the circumstance of his having been at the Oratorio——Nicholas!—it was,—it could be no other than that infernal Nicholas who had played me this abominable prank.

His well-known propensity to mischief,—the comparative ease with which he might have succeeded in purloining my credentials,—the confidence I had reposed in him as to my object in returning to London,—all combined to fix him as the author of this, another of his “jolly good hoaxes.”

But then again there were difficulties, and those, too, apparently insurmountable, in the way of considering him as my pseudo-representative; one, of no very ordinary magnitude, had that very morning made its appearance in the shape of a letter from Sir Oliver Bullwinkle. In it the Baronet informed us, that on his arrival at Oxford he found his son slowly recovering from a severe fit of illness, which precluded the possibility of his having been in London on the evening he had suspected, and declared that he would never trust to the evidence of his own eyes again. He mentioned his intention of delaying his return for a few days on Nicholas's account, as he meant to bring him down with him to the Hall, as soon as he should be able to bear the journey; he said, too, that he should call on Lord Manningham in his way.

This letter, which was almost as long, though not so pithy, as the Viscount's, had manifestly cost Sir Oliver no trifling pains in the manufacturing; it was addressed to my mother, and contained the whole of his eventful history from the period of his quitting Underdown; but as Drench strongly insisted on the necessity of keeping his patient perfectly undisturbed, I had taken a liberty which I knew she would pardon, and had broken open the well-known "fetters" which identified her correspondent.

My first impression was to write to my noble uncle immediately, but, on more mature reflection, as Sir Oliver and Nicholas were so soon to be at Underdown, I determined to delay my communication until I should be able to ascertain whether my hopeful Cousin was or was not the happy contriver of this precious piece of knavery. Nor did I believe that it would be a very hard task to put the matter beyond dispute, when once the object of my suspicions should favour me with an interview.

While I was yet balancing the *pros* and *cons* of the measure, another billet was put into my hands by Jennings, signed "Edward Maberly,

Captain * * * regiment ;"—it requested an interview, that the writer might acquit himself of a commission of some delicacy, with which he was charged by a brother officer.

Wondering what on earth Captain Maberly, whose name I merely knew as that of a young officer in a corps quartered in the neighbourhood, could possibly have in common with myself, the thought suddenly occurred to me that his business might relate to my eccentric fellow-traveller, about whom I had felt so strong an interest, till he and his concerns were totally driven out of my head by the succession of unpleasant surprises which I had since experienced. Of course I gave directions that the "gallant officer," as the phrase goes, should be admitted immediately.

The Captain, a gentlemanly, soldier-like man, whose air and manner evinced that he moved in the best society, while a scarcely perceptible touch of "the brogue" betrayed that he had drawn his first breath in the sister island, was ushered into the room, and received my compliment with the unembarrassed ease of a man of the world. Jennings, who, as I fancied,

surveyed the stranger with looks that betokened more of curiosity than he was in the habit of displaying, placed chairs and withdrew, when my unexpected visitor proceeded to open his commission.

This was, he informed me, to place in my hand a letter from his friend Major Fortescue of the * * Dragoons, who felt himself compelled to call upon me for an explanation of my conduct towards a young lady of rank, with whose family he was intimately connected, and announced himself as deputed by his aforesaid friend the Major, to arrange with any friend of mine the time and place of meeting.

Having delivered himself to this effect, the Captain quietly proffered me the billet alluded to, and, retiring to the other side of the room, amused himself by reconnoitring through his eyeglass a Dutch Fair, by Teniers, that hung against the wall, leaving me at full leisure to peruse the agreeable despatch of which he was the bearer.

“ SIR,

“ It is with painful reluctance that I yield to the dictates of an imperious and irresist-

ible necessity, which forces me to the performance of a task the most revolting to my nature. An interview of the kind I am compelled to demand of you, is at all times a matter to be deprecated, and is rendered doubly distressing when, in seeking it, I feel that I am repaying benefit with injury, by aiming at a life which has been risked to preserve my own.

“A miserable destiny, however, which I am unable to control, will have it so,—and forces me to be ungrateful rather than perjured.

“Be assured, Sir, no merely human power could have swayed me to the performance of an act which I detest; but Fate wills it, and I bow to the decree.

“My friend, who honours me by conveying this to your hands, is fully authorised to make every arrangement requisite; and I have only to add, that the earlier the hour may be that suits your convenience, the more desirable it will be to
EUSTACE FORTESCUE.”

“C. Stafford, Esq. &c. &c.”

“Mighty civil, upon my word!” I half-muttered to myself, as I refolded the note; then,

in a louder tone, "A most singular invitation indeed ! — Pray, Sir, is your friend mad ?"

"What, Sir, can possibly induce you to doubt his sanity ?" returned my gallant friend, moving away from the picture, and planting himself in front of me, while his heightened complexion evinced the offence he took at my interrogatory.

"Simply, Sir," replied I, "because I cannot conceive that any man in his senses would think of sending such a letter as this, which I hold in my hand, to a man who knows no more of him than of Harry the Eighth, nor has ever so much as seen him in the course of his life. He talks of benefits which I never can have conferred, and regrets being obliged to seek the life of one who has never given the slightest cause of offence, either to the lady you have alluded to, or to himself."

"These are matters of which I am no judge, Sir," said Maberly coldly, "nor do I pretend to explain what the motives may be which, as he says, compel Major Fortescue to adopt the line of conduct he is pursuing. I have no doubt of their sufficiency, nor do I question either the soundness of his intellect, or his honour."

"But, Sir," returned I, heartily provoked at the turn this affair seemed likely to take, "if your principal indeed seeks redress for any insult offered to Miss Stafford, I am not the person to whom he should apply."

"I believe I am addressing Mr. Charles Stafford!" was his reply, accompanied with a look of mingled doubt and surprise.

"Undoubtedly you are, Sir; but Charles Stafford is as incapable of offering insult to a lady as Major Fortescue or yourself."

"With that, Sir, I must repeat, I can have nothing to do; my business is simply to ascertain whether you will favour my friend with the meeting he desires — I am not here to discuss its propriety. — I cannot help observing, however, that you do not appear altogether unacquainted with the lady whose cause he advocates, — a lady whose name certainly never passed my lips."

"That Miss Stafford has been protected by Major Fortescue from a most audacious and unprincipled attempt I am unquestionably aware; the only thing which I mean to deny is that I have been in any way concerned in it."

The features of Maberly assumed an expression of incredulity, not unmixed with contempt for what he plainly considered the pusillanimity of my conduct in denying all participation in a transaction, now that it was no longer likely to pass unquestioned.—There was no misunderstanding the meaning which his eye conveyed, and I continued with the indignation to which his glance gave birth—"Thus far, Captain Maberly, I have spoken to vindicate myself against unfounded aspersion; if you attribute my so doing to any other motive than that which I have avowed, you are widely mistaken. The tongue, however, is not the only weapon with which I am prepared to defend my reputation when attacked, and you may inform your principal that, if he considers this declaration of mine insufficient, I have not the slightest reluctance to grant him the meeting he requires, whenever and wherever he pleases."

"When a difference of this kind exists," returned my companion, "the sooner it is adjusted the better for all parties. To-morrow morning, therefore, if you have no objection, my friend will expect the favour of your com-

pany, at seven, near the ruined chapel in the next parish ; the situation is a retired one, and little liable to interruption."

" Rely on my punctuality, Captain Maberly."

" Mr. Charles Stafford, your most *obedient* !" he replied, resuming his hat, and putting on his gloves with the air of a man taking leave after a visit of ceremony ; then, with a slight bend, which seemed to intimate that my acceptance of his proposal had somewhat redeemed me in his opinion, he moved towards the door. I rang the bell, and attended him to the hall, where we separated, he to acquaint his principal with the result of his embassy, I to make such arrangements as the time would admit of for meeting my unknown antagonist in the field, and to execute some other measures which the uncertainty of the coming event rendered it advisable for me to set about forthwith.

To procure the assistance of a friend, who might accompany me to the scene of action, and officiate as my second, was become indispensable. This, therefore, was my first care. I could have wished that Allanby, on whose honour and friendship I placed the greatest reliance, might have

been the person, but this was out of the question; the distance was too great to admit of my applying to him; he was still, as I believed, in London, and the shortness of the time which must elapse before the decision of the quarrel precluded the possibility of a communication being made to him with any chance of success. I therefore turned my thoughts towards the neighbouring garrison, with many of the officers belonging to which I was on sufficient terms of intimacy to warrant a request that they would do me the favour to see me shot properly. The very first man to whom I applied, a young lieutenant who had been in the habit of accompanying me on shooting parties of a different description in the course of the preceding winter, willingly undertook the task; and this, the first object of my solicitude, being provided for, I had leisure to turn my attention to matters of scarcely less importance.

To write to my mother — the last communication she might ever receive from a son, whom, even when she believed him to be stigmatized and branded with justly deserved opprobrium and dishonour, she yet found it impossible to

banish from her affections! — The task was indeed a severe one; a thousand conflicting emotions warred in my bosom, and rendered me scarcely capable of carrying it into execution; my letter was however at length finished, and contained, of course, an absolute disavowal, on my part, of the whole of the conduct imputed to me by Lord Manningham, the full persuasion I felt that my name had been assumed by some impostor for the most infamous of purposes, together with a detail of such facts as, in the event of my not surviving the approaching contest, might tend to elucidate the mystery, and rescue my memory from the discredit which might otherwise attach to it, should I fall a victim to the artifices of a scoundrel, and to what, an internal voice began to whisper, was a mistaken sense of honour.

That my letter contained also assurances of the warmest love and affection, I need hardly say: the remembrance of all my mother's fondness, her more than maternal kindness from my earliest infancy — the reflection that the step I was about to take might deprive her, at once and for ever, of the only solace of her declining

years, the only hope of her widowed heart — that my falling in the encounter would too surely shake out with an unhallowed hand the few remaining sands that yet lingered in Time's failing hour-glass, and "bring down her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave" — all conspired to unman me, and shook for a moment the resolution I had formed of meeting my incomprehensible antagonist.

Not that I was altogether free from some rather unpleasant sensations of a nature purely selfish, when I considered the situation in which a few short hours might place me, and the more than questionable proposition how far I might be justified, in thus exposing my own life and aiming at that of another, before that Almighty Being, whose denunciations against the crime of murder I could not shut out from my memory.

In vain did I encourage myself by the argument that, as the usages of civilised society extend the principle of self-defence from our persons to our reputation, I was as much authorised to protect that which was dearer to me than life as to defend my life itself;—a voice, stronger than that of the world, told me that I

WAS WRONG!—The awakening tones of conscience, which I would fain have silenced had it been in my power, warned me of the fallacy of my reasoning, and thundered in my ear, “Thou shalt not kill!”—Pride, that sin by which fell the angels, and a false shame,—the dread of *what the world would say*,—still drove me on to disregard its faithful admonitions, and crushed the nascent intention of even yet avoiding to dip my hand in blood, while it presented to my view myself a mark for scorn “to point its slow and moving finger at,”—a wretched object loaded with the contempt and derision of all who knew me.—No!—it was too late!—The die was thrown, and I must stand the hazard of the cast.

With burning temples, and an aching heart, I retired to my room not daring to trust myself again in my mother’s presence, and, throwing myself on the bed, endeavoured to lose in the forgetfulness of slumber the few hours which must necessarily revolve before that at which Armitage had appointed to be with me.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London: Printed by Samuel Bentley, Banger House, Shoe Lane.

SOME ACCOUNT OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.



VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
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BY THOMAS INGOLDSBY, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS."

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

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SOME ACCOUNT
OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

CHAPTER I.

Ah me ! what perils do environ
The man that meddles with cold iron !

HUDIBRAS.

NOW SLEEP THE BRAVE?—AN APPOINTMENT.—AN AFFAIR
OF SENTIMENT.—AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR.—A STANDING
UP.—A TUMBLING DOWN.

SLEEP, which I had hitherto rarely courted
in vain, refused to visit my eyelids with her
tranquillizing influence, and the grey tints of
twilight, fast flying before a sun that rose in
unclouded majesty, saw me pressing my disor-

dered pillow in feverish restlessness. I rose and unclosed the window;—the fragrance of morning—of the last morning on which I might ever inhale it—revived me: I resolved to seek, in the open air, and in activity, that refuge from my own thoughts denied me in the more confined atmosphere and retirement of my chamber.

Hastily arranging my dress, I placed on the toilet the letter which I had addressed to my mother, and, forcibly smothering a pang that seized me as the action recalled her image to my mind, descended slowly and cautiously a back staircase which communicated with the offices, and, through them, with the park. My purpose was effected without disturbing any of the inmates of the mansion, who, buried in sleep, dreamed not of the unholy errand on which I stole, like a thief, from the habitation of my fathers.

As I turned an angle of the building, the windows of my mother's apartment caught my eye. The brilliancy of the morning sunbeams, which fell full upon them, rendered scarcely ob-

servable the faint flickerings of the watch-light within, the gleanings of which, now weak, now bursting into momentary brightness, seemed to announce that it was fast sinking in the socket, soon to expire, and be no more.—“And such,” I whispered, “may be the brief tenure of my own existence here!—Oh, my mother, if indeed the irrevocable fiat has gone forth, may He who ‘tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,’ support thee in the hour of trial, and, by the blessed hope of a future meeting, assuage the poignancy of thy grief for the loss of one, who now invokes thy blessing, as he, from his inmost soul, implores a blessing upon thee!”—A shadow passed across the room between the light and the curtains, and seemed to be approaching the window. Nothing doubting but that it was Martha, who remained in attendance on her mistress, and fearing to be seen at that early hour, I ended my apostrophe abruptly, and rushed into the obscurity of the neighbouring shrubs.

A few moments’ exertion freed me from the thicket in which I had ensconced myself, and

placed me in a path which, winding among shady recesses in a circuitous direction, finally emerged near the end of the avenue that led from the Hall to the high road. As I approached its termination, the appearance of Armitage, hastily advancing with a small mahogany case under his arm, told me that it was time to repair to the place of our appointment. I joined him immediately, and we proceeded forthwith towards the scene of rendezvous.

As we walked along with quick, undeviating footsteps, the good-natured Lieutenant inquired more particularly into the cause of quarrel, hinting at the pleasure it would give him should the matter admit of such an explanation as might allow the affair to be accommodated without prejudice to the feelings or character of either party. This I felt to be impossible, but contented myself with telling the worthy fellow that he was nearly as well acquainted with the real grounds of the dispute as myself; that I merely obeyed the summons of a gentleman, who, as I verily believed, was visiting on

my head the aggression of another ; but that, as my endeavours to convince him of his mistake had been in vain, we must even abide by the decision to which he had thought it necessary to appeal. This account increased the desire, which the Lieutenant had from the very first entertained, of terminating the business without bringing it to the issue of mortal arbitrement ; and he entreated me to permit him, previously to anything else taking place, to use his endeavours to procure an amicable adjustment of a difference, which, after all, as he observed, had evidently originated in mistake.

“ It will be useless, Armitage,” I replied ; “ nevertheless, act as you think proper. I know you too well to fear that my honour will suffer in your hands ; but, from the terms in which his invitation is couched, I am convinced my gentleman will not be satisfied without burning a little gunpowder.”

“ Is he so determined an enemy ? Pray, what sort of a person is your antagonist ?”

“ Upon my word, that is rather a puzzling question, as I am not quite sure that I ever set

eyes upon him in my life. He holds a commission in the dragoons, however, and that is all I can tell you, being almost all I know of him myself."

"It is altogether a very extraordinary affair," returned Armitage. "You shall not fight, however, if I can prevent it;—but stay,—here is the old chapel, and yonder, if I mistake not, come our men."

He was right;—a few seconds brought us together; Captain Maberly and his friend advanced from an adjoining field, the latter wrapped up in a large *surtout*, which he unfolded as we drew near, and revealed the person of my fellow-passenger on the mail, whom I had pulled out of the river two days before.

I cannot say that I was altogether unprepared for this recognition; the possibility of it had more than once occurred to my mind since Maberly's visit, and the supposition had acquired additional weight from some passages in his letter, which I found it otherwise difficult to comprehend; still I had some doubts on the subject, as I could scarcely believe it

possible that the most sanguinary of mankind would, whatever his primary intentions might have been, persist in raising his hand to deprive that man of life who had so recently preserved his own, and that too in a quarrel in which he could feel but little personal interest—but little interest?—A thought flashed upon my mind with the rapidity of lightning, and dissipated in an instant the reluctance I had hitherto felt to commence hostilities.—Amelia Stafford—for her he had come to contend, and her he was determined to possess, though the removal of so formidable an obstacle as myself, by any means, might be a necessary preliminary.—She was the object of his, perhaps mercenary, attachment.—She whom he had rescued from a plot contrived, in all probability by himself, and which my death was indispensable to conceal from eventual detection!—This indeed presented a ready solution to the mystery;—as the champion of her cause, and the avenger of her injuries, he would stand on a proud eminence, and challenge her love with a powerful, perhaps irresistible, claim; while in my de-

struction he would not only lay the foundation of his own hopes, but obtain the removal of a rival, doubly dangerous from the well-known wishes of her father in my favour, and the power I must inevitably possess of unmasking him to Lord Manningham, a single interview with whom might be sufficient to level with the dust the flimsy superstructure which his arts had raised.—That the whole personation of myself, the elopement, and pretended rescue, were but parts of a systematic and villanous plot, of which my destruction was to furnish the *dénouement*, I no longer entertained a doubt, and the indignation which this conviction gave rise to in my mind, operated so strongly upon me, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could restrain my impatience, while our seconds were arranging the necessary preliminaries. I burned to chastise the villany which I fancied I had detected, and to inflict a severe retribution for my defeated pretensions and vilified character.

While Armitage and Maberly, who had retired a few paces apart, were preparing the weapons, and conferring on the business which

had brought us together, Major Fortescue remained at a short distance from me, leaning against a tree.

His face was pale,—almost livid, his air abstracted, and he appeared to be labouring under the deepest dejection. He had raised his hat to me when we first met, and seemed as if wishing to address me; but, enraged at his ingratitude and hypocrisy, I showed no corresponding inclination, and he accordingly renounced his intention, if indeed he had ever entertained it. His eyes were now fixed upon the ground, his arms folded across his breast, which heaved high at intervals, as if from the effect of some strong internal emotion. I turned from gazing on him to watch the motions of our two “friends”—so we term the people who load the pistols that are to blow our brains out—they were now deeply engaged in conversation.

In a few moments Maberly quitted his companion, and, rejoining Fortescue, made a communication to him; a short but animated discussion took place between them, at the close

of which Maberly returned to my "friend," who, after listening to him for a few moments, stepped up to me and informed me that he was the bearer of a proposal from Major Fortescue, who, from the great reluctance which he felt to proceed against one from whom he had recently received so great an obligation, was prepared, he said, to drop the dispute, and consent to sink the past in oblivion, provided I would offer such an apology to Miss Stafford as he should feel warranted in recommending her to accept.

"Tell Major Fortescue," I exclaimed, half-choked with passion, "that the most ample concessions *he* could offer to *me* would now be insufficient to appease the sense of injury which I feel, or to avert the vengeance I am determined to exact.—Let him take his ground!"

Armitage retired in silence, and proceeded to measure out twelve paces, at either extremity of which my antagonist and myself took our stations; the weapons were delivered to us, and Maberly having given the signal by dropping his handkerchief, each discharged his pistol

at the same instant.—Fortescue's aim was but too correct ; his ball struck me, and I fell ; the blood flowed copiously from my breast, and in a few moments I became totally insensible to all that was passing around me.

CHAPTER II.

There's honor for you !

SHAKSPERE.

No bones broke, but sore pepper'd !

MIDAS.

"ENOUGH IS AS GOOD AS A FEAST."—A SUDDEN ILLNESS.
—A SLOW RECOVERY.—"GETTING ONE'S GRUEL" META-
PHORICALLY—LITERALLY.—THERE'S LIFE IN A MUSCLE.

On recovering my senses, I found myself stretched upon a flock bed, in a neighbouring cottage to which I had been conveyed, and supported in the arms of Armitage, whose manly countenance expressed the joy he felt at seeing those eyes re-opening to the light of day which he had believed to be closed for ever.

Drench, accompanied by an assistant, was

standing near, occupied in examining the wound, preparatory to an attempt he was about to make at extracting the ball, which, having entered the higher part of my right breast, had glanced against and broken the collar-bone, finally taking up its quarters in the upper part of the shoulder near the neck.

The operation was a long and painful one, and I more than once relapsed into a state similar to that from which I had so lately emerged before the surgeon's endeavours were crowned with success. The bullet, however, was at length dislodged from its asylum, and made its appearance, together with a fragment of my waistcoat, which had very lovingly accompanied it in its progress. Drench announced his prize in a tone which betokened the satisfaction he felt at its extraction, adding that, notwithstanding the great effusion of blood which had taken place, he saw at present no reason to apprehend any ultimate danger from the wound,—though it was certainly a severe one,—provided a strict attention to regimen, and to the medicines he should prescribe for the

purpose of guarding against the access of fever, was rigidly observed.

This opinion, most oracularly pronounced, seemed to give great satisfaction to some one present, though, so qualified, it amounted in effect to little more than that pronounced by Fielding's model for all diplomatists—

“ Indeed, I cannot positively say,

But, as near as I can guess—I cannot tell.”

“ Powers of Heaven ! accept my thanks ! ” exclaimed a voice from an obscure corner of the apartment, in the tones of which I had no difficulty in recognising those of Fortescue.

A tattered curtain of the coarsest materials, which hung at the side of my humble couch, had hitherto concealed him from my view. I made an effort to draw it aside, but the pain occasioned by the motion compelled me to desist. The friendly Lieutenant, whose attentions had throughout been unintermitting, saw my purpose, and accomplished it for me. My eye rested upon my late antagonist, who, perceiving that I was aware of his presence, advanced slowly, and placed himself at the foot of the bed.

As I marked the agony depicted on his countenance, a doubt as to the truth of my late suspicions sprang up in my mind, and I could not help confessing to myself that his agitation bore every sign of being the genuine emanation of his heart. If it were assumed, and merely the fictitious display of a concern foreign to his feelings, he must be indeed the prince of hypocrites; yet, supposing it real, how could I reconcile its existence with the line of conduct he had pursued?

While I hesitated, his eye sank under the steadfast gaze of mine, and, uttering a deep sigh, he walked round the bed until he reached my pillow, when, bending over me, he took my hand.

“Stafford!” he exclaimed in a voice of almost awful solemnity, “how deeply I lament the issue of this affair, no one, but the unseen Being whose behests I have obeyed, can truly witness. Could you but see my heart, however, you would confess that your situation is Paradise compared with mine, and you would look on me with pity rather than resentment. Hea-

ven alone knows how fervently I have prayed to be spared this deed, and, even at the risk of my soul's happiness, would I have avoided it, could you have been prevailed upon to make the only atonement in your power."

I cannot describe the disgust I felt at what I again began to consider the cool impudence of this declaration. "Cease, Major Fortescue," I replied, "your hypocritical condolences on an evil of your own creating, nor add insult to injury. You have played your part hitherto triumphantly, but be not too secure; the time will come, I doubt not, when I shall be able to unmask your motives, as well as those of the villain who has assumed my name to perpetrate an act, which you still persist in charging upon me. A single interview with Lord Manningham will suffice to overthrow your machinations, and to convince him, by the evidence of his own eyes, of the imposition which has been practised upon him.—Leave me, Sir;—I neither need your affected sympathy, nor desire your presence."

The earnestness of my manner appeared to

make an impression upon him; once again he raised his penetrating eye to mine, as he repeated, in an under tone, the word "Imposition," and seemed as if he would read my very soul,—“Imposition!” he continued, with an incredulous but melancholy movement of the head —“Oh, that it were possible!—but it cannot be—Lord Manningham and his lovely daughter could neither be themselves deceived, nor would they practise such a deception upon me.”

“Of the latter fact I am very well satisfied,” retorted I; “but that they have themselves been grossly, infamously deceived, I reassert. That you, Sir, have laboured under a similar delusion I by no means take upon me to maintain; and, but that I believe the information to be, as far as you are concerned, unnecessary, I would repeat, that with Lord Manningham I have never yet exchanged a single syllable.”

“Gracious Heaven! what would you insinuate?—Is it—can it be possible that there *may* have been an error!—If so, what then am I!—But no! It is *not* possible—Lord Manningham himself assured me”——

"That a scoundrel," interrupted I, staggered in my opinion by his manner, "had introduced himself into his house, and had endeavoured to carry off his daughter; but Lord Manningham could not know that his nephew's carelessness, in suffering a letter to be purloined from him, afforded an easy opportunity to the thief, or his confederates, of palming on him a fictitious relation, and of nearly making his Amelia the prey of a swindler."

Never shall I forget the expression of Fortescue's countenance as I finished;—surprise, distrust, and horror appeared to be contending within him for the mastery. "What am I to believe?" cried he at length, but in a voice faltering and scarcely articulate, then—changing at once to deep sepulchral hoarseness, while his figure seemed to dilate to more than its usual magnitude;—"Mr. Stafford," he continued, "answer me, I conjure you, as a gentleman and a man of honour; and, as you hope for happiness in this world and the next, answer truly!—Are you not the man, who, after meeting Miss Stafford at the theatre, introduced

yourself to her father as his nephew, and eventually carried off the young lady to St. Albans !”

“ I am not, so help me Heaven !—That I saw Amelia at the theatre is true, but I was at that time ignorant of her name ; I saw her once afterwards descend from a carriage at her father’s door, but neither then, nor on any other occasion, previous or subsequent, did I exchange one syllable with her.—Unless the gentleman, who at that time accompanied her, be her father, I have never seen Lord Manningham in my life !”——

The exertion I had used in uttering these words was too much for me, and I sank back, exhausted, on the pillow. Drench immediately interfered, blaming himself for having permitted the conversation to continue so long in my present condition.

“ Come, come, gentlemen,” cried the doctor, summoning up all his dignity and determination, “ I must have no more of this, or my patient will give me the slip after all ;—and you, Sir,” he added, addressing himself to For-

tescue, "now that this more serious matter is disposed of, let us examine your hurt."

It was now that I, for the first time, perceived that Fortescue also was wounded. His escape had been indeed a narrow one, the bullet from my pistol having grazed his temple, the skin of which it had slightly razed. The wound was, of course, trifling in the extreme, but of that, and indeed of every thing else around him, he appeared to be now altogether unconscious. The proffered assistance of the surgeon he neither accepted nor repulsed, but remained for some moments as in a state of stupefaction, his eyes fixed upon my face with a vacant stare, frightful to behold and almost impossible to describe;—a filmy glassiness obscured their orbs, and gave a ghostliness to their appearance, to be equalled only by that of the fabled Vampire.

He remained as it were rooted to the floor for a few seconds, while Drench was describing the exceeding inconvenience which might have arisen "had the ball taken a direction ever so little more to the left, and fractured the parietal

bone,"—then turned, and abruptly rushed from the cottage.

A chaise, which a son of the peasant whose house we occupied had been despatched to order from the neighbouring town, soon after arrived; into it I was, with some little difficulty, lifted, and, accompanied by Drench and Armitage, who refused to quit me while his attentions could be at all serviceable, I was conveyed at an easy pace to the Hall.

As we slowly rolled along, my thoughts once more reverted from the strange scene which had just passed, to the situation of my mother. I recollected with much uneasiness the letter which I had left for her in my chamber, and trembled with apprehension lest it should have been discovered and delivered according to its address. If so, what severe, and, as I now trusted, unnecessary pangs might I not have caused her!—nay, who could tell how far she might have been affected!—I might be her murderer!—In spite of the prohibitions of the doctor, who enjoined me silence, I could not forbear giving vent to my feelings, and ex-

pressed my alarm with an earnest request that the driver might be directed to accelerate his pace, in the hope of preventing so fatal a catastrophe. This, however, Drench positively refused to accede to, endeavouring to dissipate the uneasiness I could not help feeling by reminding me that it was yet scarcely eight o'clock, and of the utter improbability that any communication would have been made to the invalid at so early an hour, even admitting,—what was very unlikely,—that the letter had as yet been found by the servants.

Happily his prognostics were verified by the event. My very absence had not been noticed, nor had any one entered my room since I quitted it. The chaise was directed round to a back entrance, and I was carried to my chamber, in a different part of the building from that occupied by Mrs. Stafford, without the slightest bustle or disturbance.

Poor old Jennings, with sorrow legibly depicted in his venerable countenance, as the ready tear stood in his eye, undertook to officiate in the capacity of head nurse ; while

Drench assumed the delicate and difficult task of breaking to my mother, as gently as he could, the event which it was impossible to keep altogether from her knowledge, and also of recounting to her the whole history of my proceedings in London, together with the rascally trick played me there, of all which I now felt obliged to make the worthy son of Hippocrates my wondering confidant.—As to my suspicions concerning the principal actor in the farce which had like to have had so tragical a *dénouement*, those I kept closely concealed, for the present, in my own bosom.

Of this arduous commission the little doctor acquitted himself with a degree of skill and caution which deserved the highest praise. My mother was indeed sensibly affected at the intelligence of my mishap, but, when he coupled with it the satisfactory information, that provided common care was observed, nothing more serious than a temporary confinement was now to be apprehended, the assurance of that fact, and his story so completely exonerating me from the charges brought against me, tended

most happily to compose, rather than to excite, her mind; and, however mixed her sensations might be, those of a pleasurable nature evidently gained the preponderance. Indeed, the anxious desire she now felt to see and console me so stimulated her to exertion, and to the shaking off the torpor which had benumbed her faculties, that I have no hesitation in declaring that the circumstance contributed, on the whole, not a little to the re-establishment of her health.

At first her visits, under the regulation of Doctor Drench, were, like those of angels, "few and far between;" but, as her strength improved, and the chances of fever on my side became less to be apprehended, they increased both in their frequency and duration, till, at length, almost all my mother's time was passed in my apartment.

Several days had elapsed since the duel, and everything, in the language of the infirmary, was going on "as well as could be expected."—The broken bone had been set without difficulty, and, save that the hæmorrhage had produced a

considerable degree of weakness, which Drench's water-gruel and barley broth (sorry substitutes for the roast-beef dinners I had been in the habit of discussing) did not altogether tend to correct, I was neither in bad health nor in low spirits, when, one evening, as the shadows were lengthening in the setting sun, the sound of a carriage, and an increasing bustle within doors, announced the arrival of some personage of no common importance.

This *distingué* I ventured, and not without reason, to prophesy was Sir Oliver himself, returned from his expedition; and soon the sound of his voice, issuing from the hall and echoing up the great staircase, reflected the greatest credit on my skill in divination.

Miss Pyefinch, who had accompanied my mother to take her tea in the apartment of the invalid, stepped out to inform herself of the cause of the unwonted bustle in the lower regions. She soon came back with the information that the Baronet had arrived, accompanied by two gentlemen and a lady; and that, having earnestly inquired after the state of my health, as well

as that of Mrs. Stafford, the whole party was now ensconced in the Cedar parlour, where the presence of my mother was particularly requested, "provided she felt herself equal to the exertion."

It was a source of no little wonder to me how Sir Oliver could have become acquainted with the events of the preceding week, as, being at the period such a bird of passage, no one had known exactly where to address a letter to him with any probable chance of its coming safely to hand, and consequently none of the family had written to him on the subject; I could only conclude, therefore, that he had picked up the news of my *rencontre* from some gossiping neighbour, as his post-chaise brought him through the town; but, on starting this supposition, Miss Kitty electrified me by replying that, though she knew not where my uncle had gained his information, "there was no post-chaise in the case, as the party had arrived in a handsome travelling barouche, with several outriders in rich liveries."—Eagerly did I inquire the colour of the latter; the answer was, to my

infinite joy, and as I had foreboded—"Green and Gold."—Lord Manningham then was arrived, and the whole of this mysterious affair would now be sifted to the bottom !

The hour subsequent to my mother's quitting my apartment, which she did immediately on receiving Sir Oliver's summons, was, I verily believe, one of the longest ever passed by mortal man. I had not even the poor consolation of indulging my own conjectures in quiet, as my companion, Miss Kitty, became now more than usually voluble in giving vent to her own surmises and remarks ; and, as she was not particularly happy in the brilliancy of the one or the ingenuity of the others, I should at that moment have infinitely preferred the peaceful enjoyment of my own ; this too the rather, as I had already commenced a curious speculation with regard to the identity of "the Lady," whom my informant mentioned as constituting one of the *partie quarrrée* in the "handsome travelling barouche."

It is true Miss Pyefinch had been totally silent as to the age and personal appearance

of this traveller of the softer sex, and a feeling, which I did not stop to analyse, prevented my making any inquiries of her upon the subject; but my heart whispered me that it could be no other than Amelia, the fair, the unconscious cause of my late misadventure and present confinement.

Always impatient of restraint, I now regretted it the more seriously, inasmuch as it precluded the possibility of my at once satisfying myself whether these fond anticipations were correct. Nay, but that the deranged state of my toilet was altogether incompatible with the attempt, I much doubt whether my wound alone would have been a consideration sufficiently strong to have prevented my making a trial, at least, of the ability of my legs to support me to the Cedar parlour. At length, to relieve my fidgety impatience, which had risen to such a height as to drive my fair entertainer into a monologue, the sound of some one approaching was heard from the gallery that led to my apartment.

I had half raised myself from the sofa on which I was reclining, in eager expectation.

of I hardly knew whom, when, as it drew nearer, the footstep sounded heavily and was evidently that of a man : in a few seconds the door opened, and I fell back into my former position as I beheld—Fortescue !

My surprise at the sight of this very unexpected visitor, at first prevented my observing the very peculiar expression which his features had assumed. I could not, however, help at length remarking the singular and mournful wildness of his manner, as, drawing a chair in silence, he seated himself opposite the sofa, and fixed his full dark, penetrating eyes upon me, with a glance of the keenest scrutiny.

“ It is, it must be so ! ” he at length exclaimed, his sudden and unlooked-for appearance having too much disconcerted me to admit of my addressing him at the moment. “ It must be so,—Mr. Stafford, I greatly fear—fear, did I say ? —hope would have been a more appropriate expression—that I have been greatly, dreadfully deceived, that I have been driven, goaded on, to the perpetration of an act, to you most unjustifiably injurious ; and, oh ! how much more so to my

own peace of mind!—And yet, if so it be, what am I to think!—Is this hand never to be free from the stain of blood? Must I again—”

His lip quivered, and, as he covered his eyes with a tremulous hand, I could perceive that his whole frame was strongly agitated by some internal emotion.

“Major Fortescue,” I replied, “your conduct and expressions through the whole of this business have been such as I profess not to be able either to explain or comprehend; but if the latter, as I presume may be the case, allude to an imposition which, I am half inclined to think, has been practised upon you, know, Sir, that Lord Manningham is now in the house, from whom I shall, I doubt not, receive ample justice, and whose testimony will at once prove the little foundation that has existed for those calumnies which have been fastened upon me. As to any ulterior proceedings, you will use your pleasure. I never did, and never shall, shrink from vindicating my reputation in any way you, or any other person, may think proper to require.”

“Oh, Stafford,” rejoined my singular companion, “how much do you mistake the nature of my feelings towards you! — If my heart bled when I thought myself forced by an irresistible command to point my weapon at the breast of him whom I would gladly have taken to my own, what must it now do when I perceive that he, my preserver, was guiltless of the act which, even if committed by him, would but too surely have failed in justifying me to myself for his destruction? — Lord Manningham is indeed here — here, beyond all question, to convict me of the blackest ingratitude, and to plunge me once more into that ocean of uncertainty and impending crime from which I fondly hoped that I had at length escaped.”

Thus saying, he wrung my hand with a pressure almost amounting to violence, while a cold shuddering showed the strength of the convulsive affection which shook his whole body.

“Strange, incomprehensible man!” I exclaimed; “against whom, then, is this ‘impending crime’ to be directed? or who is that powerful and remorseless instigator, whose sanguinary

behests you find it so impossible to disobey, even when they go to the diabolical extent of depriving a fellow-creature of life! — Who is this fiend? — Is it, can it be possible, that Lord Manningham ——”

“ Oh, no! no, no! — Lord Manningham is as innocent of the knowledge as —— . But we are interrupted — no more of this at present. You shall one day know the story — the brief, yet miserable story, of the unhappy being before you; — and then you will pity, — yes, Stafford, you must pity, though you may not forgive me. — They are here.”

He rose as he uttered these last words; and, relinquishing the hand which he had hitherto retained, walked to the window, while the opening door exhibited to my view the figure of Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, ushering into the room the well-remembered, venerable, and military-looking personage, whom I had seen alight from the chariot on the eventful morning of my mortifying repulse.

A smile of good-humoured urbanity relieved the serious expression which concern at my

situation appeared to have cast over his countenance, as, advancing into the chamber, he proffered me his hand, saying, without waiting for the Baronet's introduction—

“ Will my dear nephew excuse the petulant and absurd conduct of an old man who ought to have known better ! and forgive the mistake which, through the knavery of a rascal, occasioned him so rude a rejection, in a house the doors of which ought to have flown open of themselves to welcome him ? ”

The air of frank good-humour, by no means devoid of dignity, with which Lord Manningham made his advances, would at once have dissipated any remains of resentment which I might have retained against him, had it been possible for me, with the conviction I now felt that an impudent imposition had been practised upon both of us, to have suffered any such to exist.

My reply was perfectly in accordance with these sentiments ; and a few moments sufficed to put all parties, with the exception of one individual, completely at their ease,

That one was Fortescue,—the eccentric, the inexplicable Fortescue. The address made to me by my noble uncle had evidently convinced him of what indeed he had before, apparently, ceased to doubt, namely, that his vengeance had been misdirected, and levelled against a person in no way implicated in, or responsible for, the villainous transaction which, it seemed, he considered himself commissioned to chastise. Nevertheless, from his demeanour during the conversation which ensued between my two uncles and myself,—a conversation which he witnessed without joining in,—it would have been difficult to determine whether joy or regret was the predominant feeling of his mind at the *éclaircissement* which ensued.

From this colloquy I collected that, immediately on quitting me, my late antagonist, whom my repeated declarations had at last staggered in his belief of my being the insulter of Miss Stafford, had flown, with all the speed good cattle and well-fee'd drivers could exert, to Grosvenor Square, where he found Sir Oliver, then recently arrived in London, in close divan

with Lord Manningham on the very subject he had himself travelled so eagerly to introduce.

The result of their conference was such as to convert the doubts he had already begun to entertain almost into a certainty of his mistake ; the fact, however, turn out as it might, it was soon resolved, should be forthwith ascertained by the evidence of Lord Manningham himself, who, wishing as earnestly as any one to dive at once to the bottom of the mystery which enveloped the whole transaction, readily acquiesced in a proposal made by Fortescue, and strongly seconded by Sir Oliver, that he should, with all convenient speed, accompany the latter to Underdown Hall, and satisfy all parties, by the test of ocular demonstration, whether the person wounded — a word, by the way, which made the good Baronet jump out of his chair as if the seat had been suddenly subjected to the action of an electric conductor — was, or was not, the identical hero of the memorable expedition to St. Albans.

CHAPTER III.

Thrice happy they who tread the sacred ground
Where Learning's joys with Peace serene are found.

SARPE.

THE LIONS.—SPURS AND SWORDS.—SKULLS AND BONES.—
PRIDE IN A PUNCH-BOWL.—HISTORIC DOUBTS.—AN EPI-
TAPH.—A PRIZE POEM.

SIR OLIVER, whom we left amusing himself with the "lions" at Oxford, had derived, it seems, so much gratification from the scenes there submitted to his view—scenes which, independent of their real beauty, possessed also the seducing charm of novelty to recommend them to his notice—that he was easily persuaded to extend the period which he had originally determined should be the limit of his stay, and to accompany his son to the party

at Oriel, the invitation to which had been the means of introducing Mr. Hanbury to his acquaintance.

With this young gentleman, indeed, Sir Oliver had become much pleased, as he had very good-naturedly devoted a good deal of time to the accompanying him through the University, and pointing out to his notice everything in it that is usually an object of curiosity to strangers.

In this, his voluntarily assumed office, he acted as a most efficient substitute for my Cousin Nicholas, whom the egotistical details in which I have lately indulged have occasioned me too much to neglect.

The strength of this interesting invalid was, as he informed his father, scarcely yet renovated enough to admit of his undergoing the fatigue of "lionizing," though he occasionally attended him on some of his shorter perambulations.

The impression made upon the Baronet's mind by the wonders of Alma Mater was a profound one, and filled him with much veneration for those seats of learning, of which, if

the truth must be told, he had previously entertained a very inadequate, not to say derogatory, idea.

The immense collection of volumes contained in the Bodleian filled him with wonder and amazement, which was not a little heightened when his son informed him, that, in order to obtain even a moderately respectable degree, it was absolutely necessary for the student to make himself master of at least three fourths of their contents. This piece of intelligence, deriving all due weight from the gravity with which it was announced, and the confirmation of Hanbury, struck him with no little awe, or, as Nicholas happily expressed it, "quite conglomerated the Governor's faculties," while it tended much to abate the regret which he had begun to entertain at the recollection of his never having himself prosecuted his studies in a place, the very air of which seemed impregnated with wisdom and science.

The Ashmolean Museum, too, came in for its due share of admiration, with its gloves and spurs of the unhappy Charles the First, its Henry the

Eighth's crystal-hilted sword, and one of the skulls of Oliver Cromwell, the fellow to which is, I am told, preserved with equal care at Naseby,—a smaller one, said to have belonged to him when a little boy, and once in the possession of Sir Ashton Lever, is, I believe generally admitted to be spurious.

These, and other relics of the olden time,—not forgetting the gigantic thigh-bone supposed to have been once the property of Sir Bevis of Hampton,—drew from Sir Oliver a long and interesting dissertation on the manners and usages of the chivalrous ages, which, I much regret for the reader's sake, was not committed to writing on the spot, were it only to preserve certain authentic family anecdotes with which it was interspersed, about sundry illustrious Bullwinkles who flourished in those happy days.

The Baronet could not, however, help expressing his surprise at finding no traces preserved, in this curious repository, of the celebrated brazen head constructed by Roger Bacon, whose history, as delivered to himself by his maternal grand-

mother, he very faithfully recapitulated at large, scouting the idea that the bit of gilded wood, miscalled a Nose, to which I have already alluded, could ever have formed part or parcel of the head in question, though Nicholas quoted Bishop Heber's "Whippiad" * to convince him of the truth of the hypothesis.

The splendid crosier of William of Wykeham attracted his attention much more than the beautiful chapel in which it is preserved; but of all the curious and interesting objects presented to his view, no one article in the whole University, as Sir Oliver several times afterwards took occasion to declare, conveyed to his mind so lively an impression of the "Sublime and Beautiful," as the magnificent amplitude of the "Great Sir Watkin," the pride and glory of Jesus College.

At sight of this most stupendous of all possible punchbowls, my Uncle was absolutely enraptured;—words were too weak to express the

* Where o'er the door in brazen radiance glows
The vast projection of the mystic Nose,
Relic erewhile of Bacon's wonderous arts, &c.

extent of his admiration ; and seldom, indeed, in after days, was his favourite beverage placed before him, without a tear of sympathetic remembrance glistening in his eye, as he made some allusion to its massy splendour.

Nor were Sir Oliver's examinations entirely confined to the precincts of the University ; a hundred hallowed spots in its neighbourhood were explored. The haunted remains of Cumnor, which Sir Walter has since invested with such absorbing interest ;—the chaste shades of Bagley, and the leafy honours of "Joe Pullen's Tree,"—all underwent his scrutiny ; nor was Godstow forgotten, where, after a hearty luncheon upon spitch-cocked eels, the Baronet had the satisfaction of copying into his own pocket-book, with his own hand, the sole memorial to the fair paramour of our second Henry, which some pious hand has inscribed amidst the ruins where she died.

"Hic jacet in terris Rosa mundi, non Rosamunda !
Non redolet, sed olet, quæ redolere solet."

It is far from improbable that Sir Oliver,

with all his love for antiquity, might not have troubled himself to copy an inscription of which, in its original language, he did not understand one syllable, had not Nicholas, of whose poetical abilities I have formerly given a pleasing specimen, translated it for him into the vernacular, and recommended that it should be transferred to Miss Pyefinch's Album, in the following distich, composed, as he averred, in the true spirit of the original:—

“ Here doth Fair Rosamond like any peasant lie !

—She once was fragrant, but now smells unpleasantly.”

“ And yet,” said Hanbury, when Sir Oliver had ‘booked it,’ “ there are those who maintain that all our sympathy for the fair Clifford is only so much good feeling thrown away,—that Queen Eleanor, after all, was of the two the more befitting object of it;—they say that the bowl and the dagger are all moonshine, and that the beloved *chère amie* survived by many a good long year the injured wife who is stigmatized as her murderess.”

“ The devil they do ! ” said Sir Oliver.

“ Yes, Sir,” answered Nicholas, “ such is the

scepticism of the age. Modern research, indeed, has upset all our received impressions of English history. Harold was not killed at Hastings, Richard of Bourdeaux at Pontefract, nor Edward the Second at Berkeley castle ;— Henry the Sixth was not killed at all ;— Richard the Third was a well-made man ; his Nephews were never smothered.”—

“ It’s a lie,” cried the Baronet ; “ I’ve seen their ghosts—at the play !”

—“ In short,” continued my Cousin, not noticing the interruption ; “ Romances, ‘ it has been justly observed,’ are Histories which we do *not* believe to be true, while Histories are Romances which we *do* believe to be true ——”

“ I do not believe a word of it,” said my Uncle. “ Do you mean to tell me, Nick, that the Labyrinth, and the Clue, and the Queen, and the Poison, are not all as true as that you are sitting there !”

The Baronet, if little versed in the lucubrations of Rapin and Hume, was “ well up ” in “ Robin Hood’s Garland,” “ Rosamond’s Bower,” and the “ Seven Champions of Christendom.”

"I mean, Sir," returned the Undergraduate, "that modern research has gone far to prove the contrary."

"Prove it!—you can as soon prove that the moon is made of green cheese, or that I am sitting on the other side of the table!"

"So you are, Sir Oliver," quoth Nicholas, coolly. "Logic, my dear Sir, will prove that, or anything else, at Oxford."

"That I am on the other side of the table!" asked the astounded Baronet.

"Clearly, Sir;—for instance,—you admit that the table has two sides."—

"Of course."—

—"And that I am sitting on one side of it?"—

"Well, puppy!"—

"Then, Sir, you are most decidedly sitting on the other. Logic, my dear Sir, Logic will prove anything!"

"Logic be ——!" said Sir Oliver;—he was conquered but not convinced; and, like most people in a similar predicament, began to be angry, when Hanbury came to the rescue, and

diverted the storm by volunteering to read for the edification of the party a Poem, which he said he had just sent in as being one of the candidates for the University prize; it commenced —

“ Fronde novà viridis mea tempora cingo salicti
Cursus dum volvunt annus et una dies,
Si quæris, dubitans, cur sic mea tempora cingo?
Impromptu causa est—Cara Amaryllis abest!” &c.

I shall not inflict the whole of the poem on my readers, merely observing that my Cousin Nicholas, still performing the part of Interpreter, rendered it pathetically into English, as they punted slowly down the stream homewards under the auspices of the redoubted Dan Stewart.—

“ It’s all round my hat I wear the green willow,
All round my hat, for a twelvemonth and a day,—
And if any one asks me the reason why I wear it?
It is because my true love is far, far away!” &c.

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CHAPTER IV.

His cogitative faculties immersed
In cogibundity of cogitation !

Chrononhotonthologos.

Sweet's the Love that meets return !

Old Song.

CONSTERNATION.—OBJURATION.—SEPARATION.—VISITATION.
—PEREGRINATION.—MEDITATION.—EXPLANATION.—RE-
STORATION.—DECLARATION.

AMIDST objects of such interesting speculation, time flew quickly on, till the approach of the vacation, and the Baronet at length prepared to return to London, accompanied by his son, George Hanbury making a third in the post-chaise.

To this young gentleman, as I have already hinted, did Sir Oliver "seriously incline;" he had, in the simplicity of his heart, become much attached to him, and was not a little glad

of his company ; nor did he fail to give him a pressing invitation to continue their *compagnon de voyage* as far as the Hall, where he promised him a hearty welcome.

Hanbury, in return, expressed himself much pleased with the prospect of paying him a visit in the country, and pledged himself to do so as soon as he should have paid his respects to a maiden aunt, to whom he lay under very great obligations, and who might fancy herself slighted should he fail to pass the first week of the vacation, as usual, at her house in the vicinity of Brighton.

Sir Oliver gave him great credit for his dutiful attention to so respectable a relative, and, before the party reached town, had even granted his consent that my Cousin should accompany him down to Frump Paddock, on the express condition that both the young men should repair to the Hall at the end of the above-named period ; Nicholas at the same time averring, that, no doubt, the invigorating air of the South Downs, and the sea-breezes, would prove of material benefit to his still debilitated

frame, and increase considerably the efficacy of "Huxham's Tincture."

On reaching the metropolis, Sir Oliver drove immediately to our old quarters at the Tavistock, and inquired for me. His surprise was nearly equal to his disappointment at finding that I had left London without waiting his return; nor did these sensations experience any abatement when he had perused the letter which I had left at the bar, with directions that it should be presented to him on his arrival. My good Uncle was indeed completely puzzled by its contents, and, after reading and re-reading it at least half-a-dozen times, remained for full five minutes in a state of self-communing deliberation, which, from some, real or fancied, peculiarity of hue, communicated by its influence to the visage, the world has agreed to particularize by the name of a "brown study."

His mental abstraction was indeed for a time so considerable, as to induce a suspicion among his companions that a nap, which had more than once seemed to meditate an attack upon

him during their journey, had at length succeeded in making his senses captive to its overpowering influence,—the only circumstance which militated against this idea being the want of that musical accompaniment, the harmony of whose tones was usually co-existent with the first approaches of the drowsy deity upon Sir Oliver.

The chain of his ideas—if that expression may be used where concatenation or order there was none—gave way at length before my Cousin Nicholas, who, in his politest manner, offered his father a pinch of snuff. My Uncle took it mechanically, slowly raising his eyes from the fender on which they had been fixed, and staring him full in the face, but without speaking.—Nicholas had emptied the cayenne pepper-castor into his box ; — the titillating pungency was productive of the happiest effects ; Sir Oliver was roused at once from his “ hand-some fix ; ” — he sneezed, and unclosed his lips.

“ Why, what, in the d—l’s name, can be the meaning of all this ? — ‘ Circumstances which he

can neither explain nor control.'—'Lord Manningham prejudiced'—why, what does the puppy mean?"

"Upon my word, Sir Oliver," replied my Cousin, who, from the direction of my Uncle's eyes as he uttered this ejaculation, supposed,—or chose to suppose,—the query addressed to himself, "your question is somewhat difficult to answer, and the rather as it is perfectly impossible for me to form a probable conjecture as to its subject; but if you will allow me to inspect that mysterious epistle, which seems to have given birth to it, I shall be extremely happy to give you every elucidation in my power."

"Indeed, Sir, I shall do no such thing; what business is it of yours, pray!—but I'll get to the bottom of it—I *will* have an answer ——."

"Before I know the question, Sir!"

"Hold your tongue, you scoundrel, and don't put me into a passion; the dog has given me the slip, but I'll ——"

"Oh, Sir, is that it?" quoth Nicholas;

“ then, in my humble opinion, Sir Oliver, the best method you can adopt will be to advertise him immediately, with a suitable reward for his recovery ;—d—d careless rascals, these waiters! —I dare say, if the truth was known, they have sold him ;—is it Don or Carlo, Sir Oliver ! ”

The quickness of my Cousin’s eye enabled him to avoid the sudden impetus of the Baronet’s cane, which would otherwise, in all probability, have produced a serious contusion on his pericranium ;—as it was, the blow spent itself in empty air, but not before it had destroyed in its progress a glass of sherry negus, which, having been unadvisedly placed too near the edge of the table, came within the compass of the parabola described by the walking-stick.

For once this facetious young gentleman had overshot his mark. Sir Oliver, being far from quicksighted, was not unfrequently taken in, by the serious demeanour of his son and heir, so as to give implicit credit to a gravity too profound to excite his suspicion ; but, on the present occasion, not all the good Baronet’s bon-

homie and gullibility, of which, to say the truth, he certainly possessed a very respectable share, could prevent his seeing that Nicholas was indulging his wit at his expense ; and the conviction of this not only occasioned the destruction of the aforesaid rummer of negus, but also of an article by no means less fragile,—to wit, the small remains of patience which the perusal of my “unaccountable” letter had left in Sir Oliver’s possession.

All the influence which young Hanbury had acquired was for a while insufficient to check or divert the storm, the whole fury of which was directed against the head of the audacious and provoking delinquent ; at length, however, his interference prevailed so far as to allay something of the Baronet’s anger, while the remainder was diverted into a different channel, and, by degrees, “in hollow murmurs died away.”

This portion of his wrath Sir Oliver was rather at a loss to find a proper object for ; it appeared pretty clear to him that he had ample reason to be very much offended with somebody,—but whether Lord Manningham or myself was the legitimate

character on whom his wrath ought to devolve, was a point which he found it rather difficult to make up his mind upon at present. One of the two, it was pretty certain, must deserve a considerable degree of vituperation at his hands, and therefore, in order that, through a weak and ill-judged lenity, the real offender might not escape his justice, he scattered his blessings with no sparing hand, and with a tolerably impartial distribution, on the heads of both of us, declaring his fixed determination of calling on the Viscount, the first thing he did in the morning, for the purpose of obtaining from him a categorical explanation of, what he was pleased to term, "my d—d absurdity."

His first intention was, indeed, to proceed to Grosvenor Square forthwith; nor was it without some difficulty that he was induced, by the reiterated representations of both his companions, to delay his visit, on the ground that seven o'clock in the afternoon was rather an inconvenient hour to call upon a nobleman, who would by that time, in all probability, be thinking of his dinner.

Sir Oliver yielded rather to the repetition than the justice of these arguments, and at length suffered himself to be so far mollified as to defer his expedition till the following day, when he desired Nicholas to be prepared to accompany him; but a letter unexpectedly arriving the next morning for Hanbury, written from Frump Paddock, and announcing the sudden indisposition of his revered relative, that exemplary and affectionate young man found it absolutely necessary to depart with all speed into Sussex, carrying with him his estimable friend, at least a couple of hours previous to Sir Oliver's quitting his pillow.

He left, however, a note, inclosed in another from my Cousin Nicholas, stating the unfortunate emergency which had called him so suddenly away, and the impossibility of his depriving himself of the consolations of friendship, should the unhappy malady of his aunt terminate in a manner, the possibility of which he shuddered to contemplate. He added, moreover, that their joint unwillingness to disturb Sir Oliver after so fatiguing a journey, had pre-

vented their personally soliciting a concurrence which they knew he would not refuse, and concluded by promising to rejoin him at the Hall the instant the present alarm should have subsided.

Uncle Bullwinkle hardly knew what to make of all this when the letter was presented to him on his rising, and the strong inclination he again felt to "anathematize," rendered shaving a particularly unpleasant, and somewhat dangerous, operation; the quick contraction and expansion of the muscles about his mouth called for the exercise of all the professional experience and dexterity of the operator, notwithstanding the additional degree of steadiness afforded to his hand by the precautionary grasp of that particular part of the human countenance which gentlemen of his profession alone are allowed to handle with impunity; nor, indeed, could all his care and ability prevent his patient's occasionally absorbing a most unpalatable proportion of suds, when the mouth, he felt so invincible an inclination to open, would, more than once in spite of himself, unclose during the

rapid evolutions of the brush, as if on purpose to receive the savoury *bonne bouche*.

As soon as my Uncle Oliver was shaved, and had consigned to the recesses of his interior some half dozen eggs and a couple of French rolls, with a proportionate quantity of cold boiled beef and mustard, he proceeded to liquefy the same with half a cup of tea, and a whole quart of ale, a moderate repast, which he contrived to despatch in something less than half-an-hour, or, to use the language of the racing calendar, "performed it with ease in nine-and-twenty minutes," much to the satisfaction of himself, and the undisguised admiration of the waiters.

Being now in high condition for the work of the day, he began to think of putting into execution his resolve of the preceding evening; and prepared for a visit to Lord Manningham.

At the period of which I am speaking, the luxury of the hackney-chariot, the celerity of the cab, and the economy of the omnibus, were yet sleeping in the womb of Time; my Uncle's two shilling fare was, therefore, of necessity performed in one of those shattered and shat-

tering vehicles which modern refinement denominates "a Misery," in contradistinction to its most elegant rival, the chariot, since, in the nomenclature of fashion, technically designated as "a Swell."

The coach which conveyed Sir Oliver to Grosvenor Square was one more execrable "than all its tribe," and no enfranchised debtor, rushing from the melancholy purlieus of the Fleet or the Marshalsea, ever stretched his limbs in greater ecstasy at deliverance from durance vile, than did the Baronet on emerging from his crazy receptacle, which, in imitation of the celebrated and affable Mrs. Gilpin,—though from a motive totally opposed to the one which influenced that exemplary matron,*—he had directed to "draw up some three doors off" the mansion which was to be the limit of his journey.

Lord Manningham, fortunately for the pre-

- * The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud!—COWPER.

servation of the Baronet's equanimity, was at home and disengaged ; and his visitor, on sending in his name, -was immediately ushered into an elegant breakfast-room, with something more of respect than a supercilious gentleman's gentleman seemed previously disposed to pay to his old-fashioned figure and costume. Here he found his noble host, with his lovely daughter, in the act of concluding a morning's repast, not quite so substantial as that from which he had himself so lately risen.

The frank and cordial reception given him by the Peer, tended not a little to increase the embarrassment under which Sir Oliver laboured, from not having been able to make up his mind as to the precise demeanour which it became him, in his present state of uncertainty, to assume ; but when he received the smiling and affectionate welcome of his beautiful niece, the affair was settled at once, and the air of reserve he had thought it necessary to attempt to put on, (an air no one in this world was less calculated to maintain for five minutes,) vanished immediately. Loaded,

as he was, to the very muzzle, with queries and expostulations, it was some time before he was fairly able to fire a single shot, or get into a discussion of the matter which was uppermost in his mind.

Miss Stafford at length quitted the room, in obedience to a hint from her father, and Sir Oliver disembogued his whole cataract of surprise and wonderment at finding only an inexplicable letter from me, at the hotel, instead of myself, *in propria persona*, domesticated, as he fully expected I should be, in Grosvenor Square.

If the good Baronet was before puzzled, Lord Manningham's recital of the events declared to have taken place so recently in the family, did not much contribute to disperse the clouds by which he was obfuscated, while his own account of the loss of my first letter of introduction, and his journey to London as the bearer of a second, which, too, it appeared, had never reached its destination, produced in turn full as great an effect upon his auditor, who, to judge by the expression of doubt and surprise visible in his countenance as he steadfastly regarded the

narrator, seemed to be balancing the probabilities, *pro* and *con*, of the sanity of Sir Oliver's intellects.

How long they might have continued in this state of mutual perplexity, it is impossible to say, had not a thundering application at the hall door attracted their attention at this moment, in spite of the interest excited by their debate, when the entrance of a third person upon the scene, and the tidings of which he was the bearer, for a time rendered their "confusion worse confounded."

This interloper was Eustace Fortescue. His arrival was by no means *mal-à-propos*. — Sir Oliver, fully convinced of the physical impossibility of my having acted in the manner laid to my charge, and at the same time confounded by the positive testimony and circumstantial details of his Lordship, had become—a necessary consequence with him whenever he found himself thoroughly mystified—passing wrathful; nor is it to be doubted but that a breach,—perhaps an irreparable one,—might have taken place between my two uncles but for this opportune interruption.

At first, indeed, Fortescue's disclosures had the effect of increasing the irritation of both parties, but soon the alarm which Sir Oliver began to entertain for the life of one so dear to him as I had become, and the newly-awakened fears of Lord Manningham, that an imposition might really have been practised on him, combined to render them both more amenable to the laws of reason.

Sir Oliver, to whom the possibility of the latter circumstance had never suggested itself, had contented himself with briefly denying the whole of his Lordship's story in the aggregate,—or, as he phrased it, “in the lump,”—and the consequent indignation of the Peer at the more than implied doubts of his veracity, together with the rage of the Baronet at the supposed calumnies heaped upon his favourite nephew, now gradually sunk from fever heat to a much more moderate temperature, and the threatened storm subsided into something resembling a calm.

It was eventually agreed that his Lordship's travelling-carriage should be got ready with as much despatch as a due regard to the mutual .

convenience of the parties would allow, for the purpose of adjourning that conclave to the spot where alone this intricate and mysterious affair could receive its elucidation.

Terrified at the idea of my danger, Sir Oliver was anxious to start without delay.—Nobly eager to atone for an error he began to anticipate he must have fallen into, and shocked at its melancholy consequences, Lord Manningham was no less desirous of setting out immediately ; but the latter strenuously urged and entreated Fortescue, whose haggard looks evinced the distress of mind and fatigue of body which he had recently undergone, to defer his journey back until exhausted nature should have derived a new supply of vigour from refreshment and repose. In this desire, however, he was vehemently opposed by the object of his solicitude, who declared, with an air of determination which showed the vanity of remonstrance, that no power on earth should induce him to lay his head upon his pillow, until he had ascertained, beyond all dispute, whether I was indeed the most wronged, and he the most ungrateful of mankind.

It was evident that farther opposition would only irritate, without being effectual: Lord Manningham, therefore, gave a reluctant assent to his making one of the party, and at the earnest request of Miss Stafford, she also was allowed to occupy the vacant corner in the carriage.

Commenced under such auspices, it can scarcely be imagined that the journey down to Underdown Hall would be productive of much pleasure or amusement to any individual of the *quartet*, and the whole party must have experienced no inconsiderable degree of relief, when a turning in the road presented to the eye of Amelia a village spire, rising above a tufted knoll, which Sir Oliver announced to be that of the parish church of Underdown.

A few minutes brought them down the avenue of lofty trees which formed the majestic approach to the house, and the worthy Baronet, whose anxiety for me made him forgetful of etiquette in all its branches, sprang from the carriage with more agility than could fairly have been expected from even a foxhunter of his time of life. His

earnest inquiries were, however, so satisfactorily answered, that, checking the strong inclination which he felt to proceed instantly to my apartment, he contented himself with returning to his *compagnons de voyage*, and declaring the good tidings he had heard, as he sorely embarrassed every one of them by encumbering them with his assistance in their descent.

The party had been for some time assembled in the Cedar parlour, and a salutation, not less affecting than sincere, had taken place between my mother, Lord Manningham, and his daughter, before it was perceived that one of the company was missing.

The varied and strong emotions which combined to agitate the bosom of Mrs. Stafford at thus unexpectedly meeting with the only surviving and favourite brother of a husband whose memory was enshrined in her very inmost soul ;—the recollection which unavoidably forced itself upon the mind of that brother, how nearly the widow of his beloved Charles had, from circumstances in which he bore so prominent a part, been deprived of all that now

remained to make life valuable to her,—all conspired to render the interview so painfully pleasing to themselves, and so interesting to those who witnessed it, that some time had elapsed ere Sir Oliver, who first recovered his composure, discovered that Major Fortescue had left the room.

Divining the quarter to which his footsteps would be directed, Lord Manningham moved an immediate adjournment to the sick-room, declaring his impatience to do justice to a nephew, whom he now felt convinced he had so unintentionally contributed to injure, and to obtain his pardon for the annoyance so unwittingly inflicted.

Sir Oliver volunteered to officiate as master of the ceremonies on this interesting occasion; and Sir Robert Chester, or Beau Nash himself, could scarcely have exhibited greater alacrity—I say nothing as to grace—than he did in conducting his noble visitor up the great staircase towards my apartment; nor, although in the course of his progress he had to traverse the whole length of the “Northern Gallery,”

did the kind-hearted old man pause one instant to introduce to his new friend's acquaintance a single one of the illustrious Bullwinkles who smiled or frowned, according to their respective sexes, upon its walls.—Never, I may safely venture to affirm, had a similar mark of inattention to our renowned progenitors taken place since he had filled the dignified post of their representative; and strong, indeed, must have been the impulse of that affection which could carry him, as it did on this occasion, through their ranks at the *pas de charge* with such a listener as Lord Manningham immediately in his wake. A slight motion of one hand did, it is true, direct the eye of the latter to the panoply of the ever glorious Roger; but as the other, at the same instant, turned the handle of the last intervening door, a momentary glance only was permitted to his Lordship before he found himself, as before stated, face to face with the individual respecting whom his sentiments had so recently undergone a second revolution.

Our interview might probably have been prolonged to a much greater extent that it was,

but for the interposition of Drench, who, having called to make his daily visit, declared that the increased action of my pulse rendered a longer continuance of the conversation at present unadvisable.

The departure of my visitors did not, however, immediately produce that return of tranquillity which the Doctor had anticipated; and, with all due respect for my little friend's skill in diagnostics, I am led to believe that the circumstance of my now at last finding myself domiciled under the same roof with her who had laid so forcible a hold on my affections, had at least as great a share in accelerating the current of my blood, as the hearty, not to say boisterous, felicitations of Uncle Oliver, or the milder, but not less interesting, remarks of my newly-found relative.

Miss Manningham herself did not "show" during the whole of that to me long, long day; her "compliments to her cousin" were, however, duly consigned to me through the medium of Miss Pyefinch, and with this trifling manifestation of her remembrance I was compelled

[illegible][illegible]

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the Department of the Interior, under the act of March 3, 1879, entitled "An Act to provide for the better management of the public lands, and for other purposes."

The force of sympathy it were heresy to doubt ; the bare glimpse of a medical man will, it is admitted, operate *per se* in many disorders, (among which the toothach stands conspicuous,) so as to produce instantaneous convalescence ; the sight of a “ green and yellow ” dose,—that hue which the Bard has immortalized as the one peculiar to melancholy—had ever a most unaccountable effect upon my nerves ; Martha’s complicity and co-operation had been, with some difficulty, secured ; Miss Pyefinch’s attentions, and lumps of sugar, had been evaded, as well as the jalap, whose unsavoury flavour their sweetness was designed to counteract ; on a good constitution and rigid abstinence I relied for keeping down fever, and,—in utter disregard of that skittle-ground system of the faculty which treats a patient like a nine-pin,—first knocking him down for the purpose of afterwards setting him up again,—persisted in getting well again my own way.

My recovery was proportionably rapid, as little time was wasted in regaining a strength which I had never, to any serious degree, part-

ed with ; while all that was yet wanting, the vivifying smiles of my beautiful cousin more than supplied.

Our first interview, of course, took place in the presence of the "members of the Seniority ;" little room was consequently left for the expression of sentiment on the one side, or sympathy on the other ; but no sooner did my amended health allow me to promenade in the grounds, than I seized with eagerness the first opportunity which presented itself, to assure my fair associate—for Amelia was now become the kind companion of my walks—that there was far "more peril in her eye than twenty of their pistols,—or pestles."

I recounted to her, with all the ardour of a first, and only love, the sensations I had experienced on our first, and never-to-be-forgotten interview. I assured her of the permanency, as well as the vividness of my flame ; and, having given full vent to my passion in a very respectable ebullition of bombastic prose—I never could compass the poetic flights of Nicholas—received at length my delicious reward, in beholding the

"diamond eyes," whose brilliancy I had duly adverted to, cast modestly upon the green turf, and the "roseate cheeks" blushing with a ten-fold glow, as the ecstatic reference to "papa" fell from the "ruby lips," inaudible to any other ears save those of love.

The result of the reference thus kindly given, may be easily anticipated; Lord Manningham, in whose good graces I had risen, perhaps the more rapidly from his previous disappointment, shook me warmly by the hand, and candidly avowed that our union was, of all things, the one nearest to his heart.

The placid smile, which once more resumed its place upon my mother's countenance, evinced a joy not the less real from being quiet. Sir Oliver rubbed his hands till the friction set them in a fine glow, and farther evinced his satisfaction in a noisy good humour, which, though it sometimes annoyed Amelia, and even myself, it was impossible to find fault with. Even Captain Pyefinch mustered up words sufficient to convey his congratulations in a brief, but emphatic "wish ye all joy," while his sister incontinently took out

a virgin crowquill — alack ! the ruby-pointed, Rhodio-Perryan pens were then nonentities — and, on a sheet of rose-coloured paper, beautifully embossed round the edges, and highly perfumed with musk, set herself seriously about the task of composing an *epithalamium*. I regret much that I am prevented from delighting my readers with this *morçeau*. The only copy was consumed by an (accidental) fire ; it had, as I remember, a very fair proportion of “ roses ” and “ posies,” and “ blisses ” and “ kisses ; ” but Tom Moore has since thrown all these things completely into the shade.

The interval between “ acceptance,” and the final riveting of the matrimonial fetters, has been, by some styled the happiest portion of our lives ; this is a position which I shall not at present stop to consider. To those who have *not* gone through the probation, the argument would be uninteresting ; to those who *have*, unnecessary. Of the conversations which occupied the attention of my now affianced bride and myself, during our rambles, I shall say nothing, save that in the course of them I found all my

suspicious as to the real author of the "jolly good hoax" played off upon herself and her father, amply confirmed.

She told me that my pseudo representative was the same personage whom she had seen in my company at the theatre; of course, it needed not the description of his vermilion *chevelure*, and picturesque obliquity of vision, to settle the question as to the identity of Nicholas.

Of this pleasant young gentleman we had heard nothing, and the impatience of Sir Oliver on this account vented itself occasionally in angry ejaculations at his prolonged absence, especially after he had himself written to "Frump Paddock," announcing the visit of Lord Manningham to the Hall, and summoning its illustrious heir home, for the purpose of assisting in doing the honours.

The cause of Nicholas's silence and continued stay, I could, of course, well divine; but as I saw no good that could possibly arise from denouncing him, while the discovery of his audacity would assuredly go far to distress and harass my kind Uncle, I resolved not to expose him,

at least for the present ; reserving to myself the privilege of lecturing him pretty handsomely, whenever I might be favoured with his company, and of using the power which my possession of his secret would give me, to restrain his mischievous propensities for the future.

CHAPTER V.

Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered!—

* * * * *
Wife, Children, Servants,—all that could be found!

MACBETH.

There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

HAMLET.

AN IN-COMING LANDLORD.—AN OUT-GOING TENANT.—MUR-
DER AND ARSON.—THE UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL.—AN
ESCAPE “NOBODY KNOWS HOW.”—A NURSE AND A
NURSELING.—BOYS AND GIRLS.—PHILOSOPHY AND MAD-
NESS.—A “LITTLE GO” FROM OXFORD TO HINDOSTAN.—
BATTLE, MURDER, AND SUDDEN DEATH!—THE LIVELIEST
CHAPTER IN THE BOOK.

It was in the course of a long *tête-à-tête*
ramble that I first learned from Amelia those
particulars of the history of Fortescue with
which she was herself acquainted. The father
of Eustace, a distant relation of Lady Manning-

ham, had been the proprietor of a small landed estate situate in one of the south-western provinces of the sister island ; the greater part of which, being fond of agricultural pursuits, he kept in his own hands, letting off the remainder to tenants at an easy rent.

In no science, perhaps, has real or fancied improvement made greater progress of late years than in that of husbandry ; and although the substitution of mechanical for manual labour had not then reached the height to which it has since attained, yet enough had already been done to excite among the lower classes of agriculturists a considerable distaste for inventions calculated, as they conceived, to deprive them of employment.

Mr. Fortescue, naturally of a speculative turn of mind, was one of the principal encouragers not only of these ingenious contrivances, but of every new method of managing land which the theorists of the day suggested, partly, perhaps, from a very natural wish to improve a property by no means too large for his expenditure, and partly, perhaps, from the very circumstance that it *was* new, one great

reason for its exciting the dislike and disdain of his Milesian neighbours, many of whom, doubtless, would consider the application of traces to a plough an impious interference with the designs of Providence, which had furnished the horse with a tail to tie it to.

But for one unfortunate circumstance, however, it is questionable whether his new-fangled mode of farming would have experienced any more serious interruption than such as might have proceeded from its own occasional inefficiency ; but this one was unluckily so fraught with mischief, that not only the experiments, but the experimentalist himself, fell at length a sacrifice to it. The patronage which he extended to machinery only made him unpopular — the expulsion of an idle and dissolute tenant cost him his life.

A cottager of the name of Donovan had for many years occupied a small portion of ground under both his father and himself. When, soon after the death of the former, Mr. Fortescue, now in possession of the estate, commenced farming on his own account, this man had stood pre-eminent among those who declared that

"no raal gintleman" would have thought of such a measure, and had ever since nourished towards his new landlord a sentiment of angry dislike, which he had scarcely taken the trouble to conceal.

Donovan himself possessed all the vices of the class to which he belonged, without any of their good qualities—he was idle, dissolute, and revengeful; holding the whole race of Fortescue in detestation as "Cromwellians," strangers, upstarts, and usurpers of yesterday—alien intruders upon the soil from which the rightful occupants had been expelled.

To feelings of this description it was only necessary that some motives of a personal nature should be added in order to rouse his scarcely slumbering passions, and cause them to explode. These motives, unhappily, were at length not wanting.

The idleness of Donovan, the slovenly state of the land in his occupation, which, by its sterility and miserable appearance, seemed actually to disgrace the rich pastures and highly cultivated fields of his landlord that surrounded them,—

his constant absence at rent-day, and the impossibility of ever extracting a shilling from him but by distraining ; and lastly,—although Fortescue would never have admitted it as a reason,—his open opposition to, and derision of, a favourite drill plough,—at length induced the proprietor, in an evil hour for himself and his family, to eject this unprofitable tenant from his farm, which he forthwith added to the one already retained in his own occupation.

Perhaps it was fortunate for the numerous applicants who desired to be the successors of Donovan in the land, that he did so, as the man had been heard to observe that whoever took “the place” over his head should be at no loss for a housewarming. Certain it is that three months had not elapsed from the date of the ejectment alluded to, when the habitation of the unhappy Fortescue was entered at the dead of night by a band of ruffians ; among whom his savage exultation but too plainly displayed Donovan as preeminent, in spite of his besmeared features and the disguise of a smock-frock worn over his other habiliments. Indeed, from

the character and disposition of the man, it may well be doubted whether he would have considered his vengeance as complete had his victim died in ignorance of the hand that struck the blow.

Not to dwell longer on a scene so dreadful and revolting, suffice it to say that the sun, which had gilt with its declining beams the cheerful, comfortable-looking, homestead of Mount Kavenagh, rose on a blackened pile of smoking ruins, from which the scorched remains of the owner were afterwards drawn forth, the skull exhibiting a long and deep fracture, apparently produced by a blow from a scythe or pole-axe. The half-consumed bodies of his young wife and two infant children were subsequently discovered, and all consigned in the same day to one common grave.

Of the domestics, two, who had ventured to raise their hands in defence of "the Master," had also perished; the rest, including the nurse, had saved themselves by flight, the latter bearing with her the young Eustace, but not before the terrified child had witnessed with

horror the destruction of both his parents. His very escape, indeed, appeared a miracle, and could only be accounted for on the presumption, that a story, which came some time afterwards to be whispered about, had its foundation in fact.

This secret tale insinuated that Edith, who so courageously bore away the only surviving scion of her master's stock, was aided in eluding the general massacre of the family by a devoted swain of her own, who had carried his regard for her so far as to become a member of the murderous crew principally, if not solely, for the purpose of preserving his inamorata, and who, finding her obstinate in refusing to fly without her foster-child, assisted her in rescuing him, and gave the pair a temporary asylum in his own cottage.

The truth or falsehood of this account Edith would never directly admit or deny, even to Lady Manningham, who received her and her *protégé*, and in whose family the young Fortescue was thenceforth brought up.

The arm of the law was on this occasion

stretched forth in vain to bring the murderous assassins to condign punishment. Donovan, the only one among them whom Edith could, or would, identify, was nowhere to be found, nor was it until some considerable time had elapsed that intelligence, authentic or fictitious, reached Ireland that he had perished in a vessel which suffered shipwreck on its voyage to America.

The young Fortescue in the meantime was carefully tended and educated by Lord Manningham (who acted in every respect as his natural guardian,) along with his own children, of whom he had at that period but two.

Frederic Stafford, then an only son, was delighted with a companion of his own age, while Matilda, the daughter, soon learned to feel for the youthful stranger an affection of even a stronger nature than that which she experienced towards her own more boisterous brother ; and when the two boys, under the superintendence of a private tutor, were at length removed to a public school, it may be doubted whether, in spite of the acknowledged depression pro-

duced among young gentlemen and their mammas by the recurrence of "Black Monday," her little heart were not the saddest in the family.

These feelings were more than returned by the object of them. During all his vacations Matilda was the cherished companion of his walks, his sports, and, to a certain extent, even of his studies; while the more giddy Frederic, an utter stranger to that melancholy pensiveness which, from the fatal night so memorable in his history, had never entirely faded from the countenance of his friend, failed not constantly to rally him on account of what he was in the habit of designating his "apron-string propensities," which so often left himself without the associate he would have preferred in his field-sports and out-of-door amusements.

Time flew rapidly on. Lord Manningham's regiment was ordered on foreign service; and as the place of its destination was one of those colonies, the distance of which from the mother country renders a frequent change of troops expensive and unadvisable, the gallant soldier

made up his mind to bid a long adieu to his family and friends.

To this arrangement, however, his attached wife could by no means be brought to consent. Though occupied by the cares attending a young family, which, since Fortescue's introduction to it, "had increased, and was increasing," she hesitated not to declare her unalterable resolution of accompanying her husband whithersoever his duty might call him. Inwardly rejoicing at a determination which his heart sanctioned while his head disapproved, a but half-reluctant acquiescence was at length wrung from the Viscount by her entreaties, and the whole family embarked together, including Frederic, for whom his father had now procured a commission in his own corps.

Unwilling to be separated from almost all the friends he had ever known, Eustace earnestly entreated to be allowed to accompany them on their voyage; but this his guardian positively refused, as well as his request to be permitted to enter the army at all, till time should decide whether the wish which he now

expressed to that effect were indeed the offspring of a decided preference for a military life, or a mere boyish fancy, hastily and inconsiderately adopted, in the hope of still remaining among the friends and companions of his youth.

Perhaps it might have been better for Fortescue had his inclinations not been at this time thwarted. It is true, that for some time after the departure of the Staffords, he continued to apply himself to his studies with a greater share of industry than was exhibited by nine-tenths of his equals in age, and that he derived from his ability and application much solid and useful information ; but it is also true, that, in spite of what our " New Lights " may aver, the fruits of the Tree of knowledge are not all a wholesome description ; — many bitter crabs are to be found engrafted among its pippins ; and poor Eustace Fortescue gathered but too many of a kind, to minds of a temperament like his own, of all others, perhaps, the most deleterious.

I have already alluded to the serious and

even melancholy turn which his disposition had taken, while yet he was a boy—the natural effect of the catastrophe he had witnessed and so narrowly escaped. The tales of Edith, herself a mine of legendary lore, had not, even in his childhood, tended to diminish his propensity to the sombre and the marvellous; Fetches and Banshees,—the warnings of good angels and the shrieking of bad ones,—“black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey,”—omens, prognostications, and presentiments of death or desolation, with all the mysterious machinery of an invisible world, formed no slight portion of Edith’s creed. The very act which drove her and her foster-child from the paternal hearth, had been as plainly predicted to her as death-watches, dreams, and candle-snuffs could shadow it forth; nor can it be for one moment supposed, that all this valuable stock of information on supernatural subjects should remain a secret from him, whom the very fact of her having saved his life had contributed doubly to endear.

It is true that Lady Manningham, a woman

of strong natural sense and cultivated mind, did much to neutralize this delicious poison, while added years did more. Edith, too, the warm-hearted and affectionate Edith, was called to a world where her fidelity and numerous good qualities would receive their reward before her foster-child had doffed his jacket for that modern *toga virilis*, "the Long-tailed Coat." * Early impressions, however, once made, are not easily effaced; visionary musings continued occasionally to body forth to his mind's eye "the

* The recognition of incipient manhood indicated by the donation of this garment has ever been considered a most important and much desiderated event by the ingenuous youth of Britain. It will not perhaps be thought impertinent to the "whereabouts" of my Cousin Nicholas if I venture to subjoin Miss Pyefinch's celebration of his assumption of the symbol, as extracted from the Album of that votary of the Muses, to which I have before had occasion to allude. It is entitled

NICK'S LONG-TAILED COAT.

Modo sumptâ veste virili.—HOR.

Zooks! I must woo the Muse to-day,
Though line before I'd never wrote;
Ask you what theme demands the lay?—
OUR NICK HAS GOT A LONG-TAIL'D COAT!!

forms of things unseen ;" nor even in after days could Fortescue ever entirely divest himself of certain undefinable feelings respecting influences and intelligences above mere mortality, and more nearly allied to superstition than to experience.

Whether Eustace might not have eventually

Not the Coatee which Soldiers wear,
Tight button'd up beneath the throat,
But easy,—flowing,—debonair,—
In short a *civil* Long-tail'd Coat !
One smarter you 'll not find in town,
Cut by Nugee, that Snip of note—
A very quiet olive-brown
's the colour of Nick's Long-tail'd Coat !
Gay jackets clothe the stately Pole,
The proud Hungarian, and the Croat,
Yet Esterhazy, on the whole,
Looks smartest in a Long-tail'd Coat.
Lord Byron most admired, we know,
The Albanian dress, or Suliote ;
But he lived much abroad, and so
He never saw Nick's Long-tail'd Coat.
Or else that noble Poet's theme
Had never been the " White Capote,"
Had he once view'd, in Fancy's dream,
The glories of Nick's Long-tail'd Coat !

outgrown this unlucky twist in his moral organization, as reason and education came more fully into play, is a point difficult to be decided; since, after the departure of his friend Frederic Stafford he formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened into intimacy, with another of his old

We also know, on Highland kilt
Poor dear Glengarry used to doat,
And had esteem'd it actual guilt
I' the "Gael" to wear a Long-tail'd Coat.

And well it might his eyes annoy ;
Monkbarns himself could never quote
"Sir Robert Sibbald," "Gordon," "Roy,"
Or "Stukely," for a Long-tail'd Coat !

But though the fleet red-deer to chase,
Or guide o'er Highland loch the boat,
A jacket 's well enough — for grace
There 's nothing like Nick's Long-tail'd Coat !

Of course in climbing up a tree
On terra firma, or afloat
To mount the giddy top-mast, he
Would doff awhile his Long-tail'd Coat.

Then whence that supercilious sneer ? —
From out your own eye pull the mote,
Fastidious Critic ! — did you ne'er
In youth admire *your* Long-tail'd Coat ?

schoolfellows, a young man, whose turn of mind did much to resuscitate and encourage the half-extinguished errors of his own.

Henry Lambert, the only son of a Sectarian father, was a few years older than Eustace. He had early imbibed the wildest fancies of

Oh, "Nick 's scarce old enough," you mean?—

Why, though too young to have a vote
Or make a will, yet, sure, Fifteen
's a ripe age for a Long-tail'd Coat!

What! — would you have him sport a chin
Like Colonel Sibthorp, or a goat,
Before you think he should begin
To figure in a Long-tail'd Coat?—

Suppose he visits France — can he
Sit down at any *table d'hôte*
With any sort of decency,
Unless he 's got a Long-tail'd Coat?

E'en Louis Philippe, Royal Cit,
There soon may be a *Sans-culotte*,
And surely all must then admit
The advantage of a Long-tail'd Coat.

Things are not now as when, of yore,
In tower encircled by a moat,
Each Lion-hearted Chieftain wore
A corselet — not a Long-tail'd Coat.

the enthusiastic Swedenborg, and became deeply versed in all the half-crazy mysticism of "the Baron's" followers. Dreams, visions, and all the fantastic imagery of his own immaterial world, were, of course, poured by wholesale into the ready ears of his new friend. On a soil

Chain mail his portly form embraced,
Not, like a weasel or a stoat,
'Cribb'd and confined' about the waist,
And pinch'd in as Nick's Long-tail'd Coat.

With beamy spear or biting axe
To right and left He thrust and smote.
Ah! what a change!—no sinewy thwacks
Fall from a modern Long-tail'd Coat!

To stalwart knights, a puny race
Succeeds,—with locks *en papillote*,—
While cuirass, cuisses, greaves, give place
To silk-net "tights" and Long-tail'd Coat!

Worse changes still! now, well-a-day!
A few cant phrases learn'd by rote,
Each beardless booby spouts away,
A Solon in a Long-tail'd Coat,—

Prates of the "March of Intellect"—
The "Schoolmaster"—a *Patriote*
So noble who could e'er suspect
Had just put on his Long-tail'd Coat?

already so well prepared such seed could not fail of taking root, and bringing forth fruit in rank and precocious abundance. Sympathy became the connecting link between them, and together they plunged into the most recondite *penetralia* of their great apostle, with an ardour increased by being shared.

The better Genius of Fortescue, who had so long slept upon his post, at last seemed to awaken from his nap, but shook not off his slumbers before great, and, to a certain extent, irreparable, mischief had been done to his charge. The friends were separated before the Rosycrucianism — if there be such a word — of one of them, at least, was quite complete. Lambert, whose singular opinions had begun to manifest themselves in certain extravagances of manner

Alack ! alack ! that every thick-
-skull'd lad must find an antidote
For England's woes, because, like Nick,
He has put on a Long-tail'd Coat !—
—But, lo ! my rhymes begin to fail,
Nor dare I longer time devote !
Thus Rhyme and Time cut off the tale,
—The long tale,—of NICK'S LONG-TAIL'D COAT ! !

and conduct, was closeted one fine morning with his Tutor ;—a longer interview succeeded with the Provost of the College on the following day ; and on the next, Henry took his last farewell of Cambridge.

Eustace, thus deprived of the associate of his pursuits, once more felt alone in the world ; he, too, had undergone the ordeal of an inquiry, naturally suggested by his known intimacy with Lambert ; but in him an understanding, originally by no means feeble, had battled strongly with its insidious enemy. Where the fatally perverted intellect of his ally had rioted in full assurance, he had paused in doubt, and even in dismay. — The former gave eager and unhesitating credence to every phantasm of the excited brain, because he panted to know it real — the latter shrank from what he dreaded to find true in all the reluctant wretchedness of half-conviction.

The result of Fortescue's examination was so far favourable, that his superior found little to blame, something to pity, but enough to fix him in the opinion that an entire change of

scene and pursuits was in the highest degree advisable for the health of the young philosopher, mental as well as corporeal. For the present, however, he contented himself with writing his opinion to the Guardian of his pupil.

Some months elapsed, and at length the very day which acquainted Eustace that his poor friend Lambert had been consigned to the melancholy recesses of a lunatic asylum, brought him also Lord Manningham's consent that he should embrace a military life, should his former inclination to the profession of arms continue unabated.

The loss of the only friend in whom he had been accustomed to confide, the melancholy results which had attended that friend's speculations, and above all the perception that he had himself become an object of scarcely concealed derision to those about him—all induced the youthful visionary eagerly to close with the proposal; all had been prepared in anticipation of his resolve, and a few weeks saw him gazetted to an ensigncy in his Majesty's—th regiment of infantry.

Thus, at the age of nineteen, did Eustace Fortescue enter the world, a handsome strippling, with a fine person, features, of which the melancholy expression did not detract from their manly beauty, while it added, perhaps, to the interest they inspired — a feeling, generous, and honourable heart, and an intellect powerful and unclouded on every subject — save one.

The kindness of his disposition, and his high sense of honour, joined to his conciliating and gentlemanly manners, soon won him golden opinions at the mess; while his aptitude and intelligence secured him the respect of his superior officers, who saw with approbation the extent of his acquirements, nor once dreamed of the unfortunate *monomanie* which lay dormant in his mind, while nothing occurred to draw it forth or expose it to observation.

Unwearied assiduity and a retentive memory soon advanced the military neophyte far in the study, theoretical as well as practical, of his new profession. For many of the high-spirited and ingenuous youths, with whom he was now thrown into contact, he conceived a

regard as sincere as reciprocal ; nor was it without some feelings of regret that he at length received permission to absent himself from his regiment, on being appointed Aide-de-camp to his noble Guardian, now become a General officer, and one whose talents, civil and military, had pointed him out to the Government at home as the man, of all others, peculiarly calculated for a high command in a country where diplomacy was at least as requisite as strategics.

India, the theatre on which the powerful resources of Lord Manningham's mind were now to be displayed, was at this period in a very ticklish state. A formidable combination among the native chiefs had long been more than suspected : the nature and extent of the confederacy was as yet but imperfectly understood ; enough however was known to prove, that the prosperity, and even the very existence, of our settlements in the East were menaced.

A cool head, a quick eye, and a vigorous arm, were imperiously called for ; and Lord Manningham, who had given such ample proofs

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of uniting in his own person the various qualities of the statesman and the soldier, had proceeded to the Carnatic.

When Fortescue, too, reached the banks of the Hoogley, he found the family of his benefactor plunged in the deepest affliction. Frederick, his early friend and schoolfellow, the idolized son of parents whom his death had rendered inconsolable, was no more. A fever, contracted by imprudently bathing while his blood was in a high state of fermentation, had carried him off almost before his danger was suspected.

To his father the blow was indeed a severe one: on this darling son he had been accustomed to look with pride as well as with affection, anticipating in his person the friend and support of his own declining years, as well as the successor to his honours, and the protector of his family. He had seen him grow up to man's estate, volatile indeed, but generous, virtuous, and high-minded,—and, justly confident in the rectitude of his principles, and the sterling qualities of his head and heart, the father

contemplated with much less of regret or apprehension the approach of that solemn hour when he should himself be summoned to "go hence, and be no more seen !"

It was fortunate perhaps for Lord Manningham, that the important affairs which at this time forced themselves upon his attention, involving as they did the lives and fortunes of thousands for which he was responsible, compelled him to abstract himself from private griefs, and to devote his undivided energies to the public welfare. Occupation, the best medicine for the wounded heart, is especially so when the welfare of others depends upon it ; and by degrees its good effects became apparent. On the parade or at the council-board but little alteration could be detected by a common observer in the General or the Politician. His cheek, it is true, was somewhat paler, and an added furrow might be seen upon his brow ; but his eye had lost little of its fire, nor, except perhaps when some youthful subaltern, high in health and buoyant in spirit, came suddenly athwart his course, was its lustre

dimmed or his tongue perceived to falter. Duty, to which the Soldier's mind is disciplined, was beyond all question, too, an able auxiliary in producing this effect ; in the private recesses of his own home alone might be detected the wandering glance which, passing from one to other of his remaining children, seemed searching for a face that was not there, till, resting at last upon "the vacant chair," the sad dropping of the eyelid evinced, as it were, a sudden and painful consciousness that the search was vain.

On Lady Manningham the effect of Frederic's death was not less severe, and far more visible ; "her beautiful, her brave," was levelled with the dust, and she bowed indeed beneath the stroke. Time, and the affectionate carresses of her surviving offspring, at length succeeded in restoring in some degree her accustomed tranquillity of manner ; but the irrevocable fiat had gone forth—the blow was struck ; and, though even years elapsed before its full severity was manifested, the seeds of her eventual dissolution but too surely took their root on the premature grave of her boy.

The arrival of Fortescue was at first most painful to both of the bereaved parents. The wound, as yet uncicatrized, bled afresh at the sight of one by whom were called forth so many reminiscences connected with him who *had been*; yet such, and so inexplicable is the human heart, these very sensations soon acquired a new character, in the words of the son of Fingal, "mournful, yet pleasing to the soul." The well-known affection borne by their lamented Frederic to his friend cemented still more strongly those ties which bound him to the bereaved; while the younger branches of the family, with hearts though truly sorrowing, yet naturally less deeply impressed than those of their parents, received him at once with unalloyed pleasure, and soon learned to consider him as a substitute for the brother they had lost.

For much of this Fortescue was unquestionably indebted to his own kind, conciliating, and affectionate disposition, — for some of it, perhaps, to the evident attachment which displayed itself in a thousand forms between him and his early companion and avowed favourite.

Matilda, now a fine full-grown girl, rich in health, beauty, and accomplishments. Lord Manningham did not long remain blind to an attachment which was so unequivocally displayed on both sides, nor did he regard it with a disapproving eye.

Of the head and heart of Fortescue, as I have before said, he entertained the highest opinion; and although the accounts from College, which originally induced him to favour his entrance into the army, had represented his young friend as likely to become a sufferer from an over-heated imagination, yet the very same report spoke in the most gratifying terms of the correctness of his moral conduct, the respectability of his talents, and the amiableness of his disposition.

In his subsequent commerce with that epitome of the world which is found in a marching regiment, his general deportment had, as we have seen, been ever regulated according to the nicest rules of the Gentleman and the Soldier; and if he had not, as yet, distinguished himself in the field, or in the more active duties

of the profession he had adopted, it was manifest from his sentiments and gallant bearing that this was only owing to his not having as yet been called into his proper sphere of action, nor would any one who knew him have hesitated to assert that time and opportunity alone "were wanting to his fame."

This opportunity was not long deferred: a partial irruption of the disaffected tribes took place, prematurely indeed for their success; but certain precautionary movements on the part of the Government had apprised them that their intentions were more than suspected, and, wily as they were, an immediate outbreak seemed now preferable to the more doubtful advantages, which under other circumstances might have been obtained by a longer delay.

In the course of the desultory but sanguinary struggle which ensued, Fortescue did not belie the opinion formed of him by his fellow-soldiers; active, vigilant, patient, and intrepid, he displayed in this his first campaign an almost intuitive knowledge of tactics — a coolness and an energy which ranked him with

the veteran ; nor, in the fierce and final conflict which eventually broke the power of the enemy, and forced him to sue for peace from the depths of his native jungles, were his valour and conduct less conspicuous.

A wound, inflicted on his sword-arm by the sabre of a Subahdar, who fell in the act, was just of sufficient consequence to call forth all the cares and attentions, without exciting the alarms, of those who loved him. Need it be said, that those of Matilda were the foremost — that her hand was ever ready to adjust the bandage, her arm the one most eagerly tendered and accepted as a support ?

It was during the temporary secession from his duties, occasioned by this accident, that the hearts, the sentiments, the very thoughts of the lovers became more thoroughly unveiled to each other. Reminiscences of “auld langsyne,” the occurrences of the days that were gone, formed, as may well be imagined, no unfrequent topics of discourse between two sensitive beings, once so closely connected, then so long separated, and now again so happily united — the

freaks, the studies, the pastimes of their early years were a never-failing theme, on which to expatiate—nor was Edith, with her legendary treasures, forgotten.—The frequent allusions to her fanciful creed made by Matilda, on whose young and somewhat romantic mind her marvellous tales had produced a deeper impression than she was herself aware of, once more aroused in the bosom of her auditor thoughts and feelings which, although the busy life he had of late led had rendered them dormant, were anything but extinguished.

The visionary and the enthusiast becomes not less so under the influence of love; the nature of his reveries may be changed by passion—they may vacillate between gloom and ecstasy; but their power over the imagination is even increased, and, if partaken by the object of his affection, may be urged by sympathy to the very height of excitement.

By degrees Matilda became the *confidante* of all the day-dreams which had floated through the mind of Eustace.

To one of her tender and affectionate turn

there was a something so congenial and endearing in the theory of a communion of Spirits, freed from the grosser and embarrassing clog of matter—in the idea that, although bodies might be divided, nought could interfere to prevent the union of souls—that it is scarcely to be wondered at if, listening with eagerness to the object of her young affections, she soon learned to imbibe the most extravagant of his notions, and to believe, because she wished, them real.

Screened from the intolerable heat of a vertical sun by the intercepting verandah, or courting the coolness of the evening breeze beneath their favourite tree, minutes, nay, hours would fly by unheeded, and leave the pair, as they found them, occupied like our first parents, so beautifully described by the poet, in the discussion of mysteries too recondite and abstruse for human intellect to penetrate.

“He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was filled
With admiration and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange !”

The attachment of the disembodied Spirit

after death to those it loved, ere it "had shuffled off its mortal coil,"—its presence, and capabilities of watching over their welfare, and holding a communion with them at once intimate and mysterious, was a favourite contemplation of Fortescue, and one of his most cherished ideas. — He exulted in a persuasion, which seemed to place his love beyond the reach of accident, and to render it indissoluble, even by death itself.

It were difficult, perhaps impossible, accurately to trace this feeling to its source, or follow it, through every connecting link of the chain, to its termination in full conviction. Those cooler heads who have threaded the labyrinths of the absurd and incongruous, yet sometimes sublime speculations of the philosophical visionary whose lucubrations had bewildered him — they, and they alone, will easily conceive how powerful the spell must be upon a kindred mind on which they have once succeeded in making an impression.

It is an inseparable property of Fanaticism to be ever in extremes, and Love, even when it

has to do with stronger minds than that of the gentle and confiding Matilda Stafford, is but too ready to see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, of the one object which is everything to it, and to which it is everything. — Perhaps, too, some sad presentiment, — as the glance of her lover would fondly rest upon the elegant but fragile form before him, — might half induce a nameless dread lest that form might be *too* fragile — too nearly allied to another world to promise a long continuance in this ; while, on the other side, the recollection of her brother — so lately rejoicing in youth, and health, and spirits, — now flourishing in all the lusty prime of manhood, and then at once stricken to the earth — a withered, blighted thing ! — might have its full share in fostering the predispositions of Matilda, and in causing her to cling more tenaciously to a belief, pregnant, as she would imagine, with security — to views, the realization of which would prove a safeguard against separation, and assuage, if not absolutely vanquish, the terrors and regrets attendant upon that hour when all that gives motion

to the active, or elevation to the eminent — all that sparkles in the eye of earthly hope, or pants in the bosom of earthly affection, at once becomes dust in the balance, without weight and without regard.

Meanwhile, their union, contemplated as it was with approbation by both the parents of Miss Stafford, met with repeated checks and obstructions, not more annoying in themselves to the lovers by the delay which they occasioned to their happiness, than lamentable from the circumstances which produced them. These were the events already alluded to in the earlier part of these memoirs.

For several years might Lord Manningham's house indeed be called "The House of Mourning." — The pernicious effects of the climate upon European constitutions became but too sadly manifested. One by one his children sickened, faded, and were no more. No less than five of them were borne in succession to the tomb, and that at intervals so brief, that hardly had one been deposited in the "place appointed unto all living," ere another exhibited

tokens, but too fatally verified by the event, that its doors would soon again be opened to receive a kindred victim.

It is not to be concluded that, during the whole of this season of affliction, Fortescue was constantly present at head-quarters; his military duties, on the contrary, and the confidence reposed in him by his chief, had repeatedly occasioned a temporary absence, and drawn him, on various occasions, up the country.

These absences, however, if they could not increase, certainly had no tendency to weaken his affection or his sympathy. A correspondence of the most tender kind was kept up, when practicable, between him and his fair mistress; and when distance or other circumstances were unfavourable to the transmission of those gentle missives which

“Waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole,”

the Lover's old alternative and confidante, the Moon, interposed her good offices as no inefficient substitute. To gaze, at an appointed hour, upon her disk — to cherish the thought that the beloved one, though afar, was at the

ame instant engaged in a similar contemplation — was the resource, and speeded that soft intercourse of Spirit they flattered, and had almost succeeded in persuading themselves that they had established, despite the obstacles interposed by corporeal trammels.

During one of these expeditions Eustace had been taken seriously ill; his youth, however, and a good constitution, had triumphed after a short but severe struggle, and released him, for the present at least, from the performance of his share of a voluntary and mutual obligation, entered into at this period of their attachment, which pledged the one first departing to the “land of souls” to manifest him or herself visibly to the survivor, if so it might be, and thus to evidence that Death itself had failed to rend the ties which bound them to each other.

His return, weak and enfeebled as he was, to the Government House, was, I need scarcely say, an event hailed with joy by all parties; but especially by Matilda, to whom he failed not to impart all that he had suffered both in

mind and body, as well as the consolation that had been afforded him in moments which he had then believed to be his last, by the thought that, though expiring far from her and all he loved, his enfranchised Spirit might yet be permitted to return, to hover over, and to prove her Guardian and protecting Angel.

The tears of Matilda, as she hung in fondness on his arm, flowed freely ; the rather, perhaps, as she anticipated but too truly another separation at no distant period.

Hordes of those restless and predatory tribes, whom the courage and conduct of the Lord Governor had once before so effectually repressed, were again in arms. The most formidable accounts of their numbers and of the ravages they were committing arrived daily at the Residence. All attempts at negotiation (and such indeed were resorted to, rather than the appeal to arms might be plainly the result of necessity, not choice, on the part of the British Government,) entirely failed, and the veteran Manningham once again prepared to take the field.

- Fortescue, by this time appointed to a Majority, was of course destined to take a prominent part in the expedition : his mind, perhaps yet acted upon by the memory of his recent escape, was filled with gloomy forebodings ; something of this he could not succeed in concealing during his parting interview with Matilda, which was in consequence a more than
- usually tender one, and a solemn renewal of the contract already mentioned was made at his express and earnest entreaty. The fond girl caught the infection of alarm from him, and heavily indeed did anxiety preponderate over hope in her bosom, when the hour of separation at length arrived, and she saw her Eustace riding at the head of his column, and bound for the almost impervious forests and terrific *Ghaunts* of Nipal.

It is by no means my intention to follow him through his campaign, nor to relate "the moving accidents by flood and field" which he was destined to encounter and surmount. — The events of the Pindarree war belong to History. — It is sufficient for my purpose to state, that, on

its successful termination, Eustace, as if to belie his presentiment, returned, with unimpaired health and an increased reputation, to lay his newly gathered laurels at the feet of his beloved. He found her as beautiful, as fond as ever; nor did his entreaties, that now at length his long and tried attachment might meet its dearest reward, experience any farther repulse, either on her part or on that of her parents.

Lord Manningham indeed, in whose favour Fortescue had, if possible, continued to rise, did not affect to conceal his pleasure in consenting to the immediate union of the lovers; and the nuptial day was fixed. The very evening before the morn that was to crown his fondest hopes had arrived; and Fortescue, after several hours passed in the society of her who was so soon to be indissolubly united to him, had returned, for the last time, to his quarters, it having been arranged that, for the present at least, the young couple should take up their residence in the Government House.

The expectant bridegroom had retired for the

in endeavouring to restore animation to the pale frame before them, while their countenances sufficiently demonstrated the hopelessness of the attempt.

Not far from the couch of death, and gazed at with undisguised horror by the attendants, as they hurried to and fro, lay an object, which too fatally explained the scene. One of the most venomous of the serpent tribe that curse the arid shores of Indostan—one whose poison is scarcely more deadly than instantaneous in its effects.

A single glance at the crushed reptile, and the sight of his unfortunate mistress, revealed the whole maddening truth to the miserable Fortescue.

He threw himself in unrestrained agony by the side of her whom he had so lately left high in hope and glowing with affection,—of her whose parting spirit had, as he verily believed, called on him for aid in those more than mortal accents, which yet vibrated on his ear.

The shock was, under all the circumstances, too severe for human endurance; and, after a burst of irrepressible agony, he was borne from the apartment, insensible alike to the misery of those around him, and to his own.

CHAPTER VI.

Come, let us dance and sing,
 While all Barbadoes' bells shall ring ;
 Love strikes the fiddle-string,
 And Venus plays the lute !
 Hymen gay
 Struts away,
 Happy at the wedding-day ;
 Cocks his chin,
 And figures in,
 To tabor, fife, and flute !

COLMAN.

MORE OF "DEATH'S DOINGS."—FOR ENGLAND HO !—BILLS
 —ORDERED TO LIE ON THE TABLE.—A RACE.—A CHASE.
 A "LARK."—A TORY OUTRAGE, AND A LIBERAL ACCOUNT
 OF IT.—WEDDING FESTIVITIES.—WHERE 'S THE PARSON ?

It were needless to dwell on the melancholy
 blank in Fortescue's existence, which succeeded
 the annihilation of his fondest hopes, nor shall
 I detain my readers by expatiating on the

feelings of Lord and Lady Manningham on so overwhelming a calamity. It is my Cousin Nicholas, whose "whereabouts" I have charged myself with the task of recording, nor dare I suffer any minor consideration to interfere longer with the concerns of that interesting individual. Indeed, but that the impression produced on Fortescue by the incidents already related eventually exercised a material influence on his fortunes as well as on my own, I should scarcely have ventured on so formidable a digression from the highway of my history.

It will only be necessary, therefore, to state, that the bereaved mother never recovered the shock inflicted on her. Her enfeebled frame sank wholly beneath the repetition of blows which had long since prostrated its best energies; and, after a few short months of hopeless lingering, she followed her beloved children gently and unrepiningly to the tomb; bequeathing the young Amelia to the concentrated affection of him who was now her only parent.

In this affection towards the blooming girl

Fortescue soon became a sharer ; and often, as he turned from gazing on her animated features, his upraised eye and quivering lip would seem to intimate, that he was even then holding high and mysterious converse with some unseen being, of which the fairy form beside him was the subject.

Certain it is, that from this period the fondness of Lord Manningham himself for this " sole daughter of his house and heart " could hardly be said to exceed his own ; nor could a father watch more tenderly over the welfare of the most beloved child. Every word and action announced that Fortescue considered himself bound by some sacred obligation to be her guardian and protector against every mischance ; and as she advanced towards womanhood, this self-imposed task was only the more strongly manifested. From the broken expressions and half-uttered sentences which occasionally escaped him, a doubt would, it is true, sometimes arise in the minds of those who witnessed them, whether the task were indeed self-imposed ; and more than one of the female part of the esta-

blishment, especially, had listened awestruck to the insinuations of the wonder-loving valet, Mr. Pipeclay, as he more than hinted, that, at the dead hour of night, he had often heard "his master the Major argufying with a ghost about Miss."

That he entertained towards her the warmest affection none could doubt; as little could the nature of that affection be questioned. Love, at least the passion usually known by that name, in him was manifestly dead. No — his was the fervent but pure and hallowed attachment of an elder brother. Her father saw and hailed its progress with the greatest satisfaction, without being for one moment blind to its quality or origin; and, when affairs of importance connected with his official duties induced him to cause Eustace to precede him to Europe, nothing gave him greater satisfaction than the conviction which their parting hour afforded, that, happen what might to himself, his daughter would still possess an affectionate and disinterested protector.

On Lord Manningham's return to England

with Amelia, Fortescue was in the north, having been induced to accompany a brother officer into Cumberland; nor did the friends again encounter each other till the moment when Eustace had the happiness of placing in his noble patron's arms the daughter whom he had so opportunely rescued from the particularly impudent abduction of my Cousin Nicholas.

I have said, that of this "tenth transmitter" of the Bullwinkle physiognomy no recent accounts had been received. That he was yet in *rerum naturá*, however, was to be inferred from certain interesting *memoranda*, which occasionally reached Sir Oliver in the shape of sundry paper parallelograms, adorned with goodly columns of arithmetical ciphers, and surmounted by "the Roman initials of pounds, shillings, and pence."

To all these applications, and they came "thick as leaves in Valambrosa," did Sir Oliver put in a demurrer. "Nick had a handsome allowance, and if he exceeded it, he might take the consequences."

Many of the items, too, excited the good Baronet's surprise no less than his indignation. Of the effeminacy of the race of dandies he had heard something; but that they should have arrived at the Sybaritism of wearing "satin shoes," and "pearl ear-rings," astounded, while it disgusted him; yet many of the invoices of goods sold and delivered, which had been sent in on account of "N. Bullwinkle, Esq." comprised articles of a similar description; while long bills for "lace" seemed to intimate that, in the revolutions of fashion, the Mechlin cravats and ruffles of the first Georges were again become the prevailing mode.

"A Chinchilli muff, with boa to match," was absolutely abominable. Sir Oliver had, indeed, seen something like the latter encompassing the throat of a guardsman off duty, during his late sojourn in the metropolis;—some of the household troops, too, had, as he remembered, borne an article not unlike the former on their heads at the last review; but, then, "Nick was not in the Blues, and why the d—! should he want to stick his head in a muff?"—He could have

no pretensions to a uniform, while every notion of propriety was outraged by the supposition, that any man would introduce such an innovation into his ordinary costume.

But it mattered little ;—"if Nick chose to make a jackass and a monkey of himself he might," but not one penny would he, Sir Oliver, contribute towards such a degradation of the natural dignity of man. A large proportion of the bills were, in consequence, returned, with an intimation to the above effect, anything but agreeable to his numerous correspondents.

As Sir Oliver made no secret of these protocols, or of the extent of Mr. Bullwinkle's pecuniary engagements, some of which were of considerable standing, a new light broke in upon me. That a gentleman, whose *menus plaisirs* required such ample supplies, should find four hundred a-year, paid quarterly, insufficient for his occasions, was to be expected ; and although experience had taught me that he would readily borrow of any friend who would lend to him, yet such resources were clearly too limited, and too precarious, to form a very material item

in his budget for the current year. The mystery of Mr. Arbuthnot, then, and his Hebrew correspondent, seemed to receive a ready solution. Again did I task my memory to recall everything that had passed on that very unsatisfactory morning, when our united researches after my fair *incognita* had terminated in nothing but fatigue and disappointment. That Nicholas must have seized some opportunity, on that very day, to purloin my letter, I had before felt satisfied ; and now entertained little doubt that he had availed himself of the moment when I was discharging our bill at the coffee-house, to put in practice one of those clever pieces of *legerdemain* on which he piqued himself.

That the Jew money-lender's letter was then substituted by him for my mother's I became convinced, as well as that the needy gentleman, on whose attempt to raise cash by "de Post obit" it put so decided a negative, was either Nicholas himself, or some accommodating associate of his in the noble art and mystery of "kite-flying."

In the absence of all positive information on the subject of his present place of sojourn — for the address at Frump Paddock I looked upon as clearly apocryphal — one circumstance still induced me to believe that he was, in fact, at no great distance from the alleged locality of that retreat of all the domestic virtues.

A morning paper of high Tory principles, had copied from the *Sussex Conservative*, a formidable paragraph, to which, by way of “gracing its tale with decent horror,” it had prefixed the words, “Atrocious outrage, and horrible violation of the sanctuaries of the dead.”

The account which followed was dated from Brighton, and stated, in substance, that, in the dusk of the preceding evening, a truculent-looking ruffian had been detected in the very act of carrying on his disgusting trade of a resurrectionist, in the very churchyard of that marine metropolis:—that being hotly pursued, he had excited the greatest alarm and consternation among the elegant promenaders of the Steyne, by running the whole length of

that fashionable lounge, with the dead body of a child under his arm, the bare sight of whose projecting legs had, *inter alia maxime deflenda*, frightened the Honourable Mrs. Faddle into fits, and would, it was to be feared, from her "interesting situation," effect a change in the succession to the earldom of Fiddlefumkin. It was gratifying, however, "to be able to assure their readers" that "the monster" was eventually secured by the "intrepidity of Mrs. Martha Gun," and conveyed, with the *corpus delicti* upon him, to the nearest justice of the peace. On his examination before the Magistrate, he was fully identified as a distinguished Radical Reformer, and a leading member of Lodge No. 275 of the Grand National Consolidated Trades' Union.

The "article" concluded with an animated apostrophe on the increasing depravity and licentiousness of the lower orders.

A "Liberal" Journal, of the same date, gave a different version of the same story, extracted from the "*Brightelmstone Independ-*

ent," and headed in what are technically called "small caps"—THE TORIES AGAIN!!—INFAMOUS ATTACK ON THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC!!!—

One of "those hereditary nuisances," who so arrogantly "tyrannize over the people," had, according to this *liberal* statement, committed a daring and felonious robbery upon an eminent dealer in all kinds of spirituous liquors.

This "*Gentleman*," for so he called himself, and boasted that he belonged to a Noble (!!) family," in his sheer, wanton, "aristocratical love of oppressing the useful classes," had snatched up, and run away with, a bran new Jolly Bacchus, just come home from the painter's, and about to be placed astride upon a barrel over the door of Mr. Juniper's *emporium*.

The "world was challenged" to "ransack the annals" of Nero and Nadir Schah for a parallel to the "heartless and insolent barbarity" of thus wresting from an "honest operative" the emblem of his calling, and "opposing the march of intellect," by depriving "the people" of "a guide to useful knowledge," which taught them where to apply for consola-

tion "under the miseries inflicted on them by peers and parsons."

"Dukes and princes, as they styled themselves," were, it was added, *always* committing "outrages on the people," by their "larks;" and "it was notorious," that, when the "h—l-born minister, Pitt," was in office, a lantern had been tied to an old woman's tail in Pall Mall by the hands of royalty itself;—but "the people" would "no longer be trampled upon," "the time was come," &c. &c. &c.

It was "much to be lamented" that "several operatives," occupied at the moment in partaking of certain choice compounds, had suffered severely from the breaking of a large case bottle of oil-of-vitriol, which *happened* to be in the shop, and was overturned in the first rush after the fugitive, who, bolting, across the Steyne, with his prize under his arm, would doubtless have escaped with it altogether, had he not by the greatest good fortune, run against a lady who was crying mackerel, knocked her down, and rolled over her into the channel.

The examination, it was added, was strictly

private, and the delinquent had "received permission to speak to the prosecutor;" but the editor "had authority to state," that all attempts at compromise *would have been* indignantly rejected by the truly patriotic Mr. Juniper, but that he was induced to relinquish farther proceedings by the reflection that, as the painter's bill had not been paid, he could not conscientiously swear the image of the son of Semele to be his own property; the culprit, therefore, was of course "discharged with an admonition."

"We should ill perform our duty to the public, (said the Brighthelmstone Independent,) were we to refrain from publishing the name of the delinquent; and this we should undoubtedly do, had it not unluckily escaped our reporter's memory; we have reason, however, to believe, that he was identified as the heir to a baronetcy."

The whole was wound up *en règle* by an elaborate *eulogium* on the virtues of "producers," and an *exposé* of the practical inconvenience of having such things as a House of Peers and a Bench of Bishops, without whose corrupt influ-

ence none of these "larks" would be entered into.

That Nicholas was the hero of this absurd adventure I considered very far from improbable.

From boyhood he had been a great collector of emblematic rarities ;—wooden hats, golden boots, the lion gules of the publican, and the azure globe of the pawnbroker,—the solitary barber's pole that graced the village of Underdown, and every commercial device that the neighbouring town could supply, had early constituted the most cherished ornaments of his private apartment.

In this his *museum*, the Highlander of the tobacconist extended his mull courteously towards the Black Doll of the dealer in marine stores, and the gigantic Spectacles of the optician seemed to gaze undismayed at the gold-beater's uplifted Mallet.—Knockers, Scrapers, Shutter-pens, and Pump-handles, lay scattered around in elegant and unstudied variety.

Nor were the finer arts neglected ; a portrait of Admiral Lord Rodney, done in oil, and in

excellent preservation, needed not its subjoined legend of "Good entertainment for man and horse," to prove that Nicholas's taste in painting had withdrawn it from a more elevated situation; while a Galen's head,—umquhile the property of "Pig-tail Drench," and gorgeous as gold leaf could make it,—evinced that he was equally alive to the charms of sculpture.

That to these treasures of the moderns he should wish to add some specimens of a more ancient school was to be expected from one of my Cousin's classical mind. The convivial Deity of heathen mythology would harmonize admirably with a magnificent Bunch of golden grapes which already depended temptingly from his ceiling, and of all "the gods of the Greeks" *Lycæus* was the one for whom he professed and felt the greatest veneration. Hence, as I was persuaded, the attack upon the unpaid-for property of the conscientious Joseph Juniper; and I looked forward with confidence to the time when, "flushed with a purple grace," the jolly God would yet "show his honest face" in one of the back attics of Underdown Hall.

Meanwhile my own affairs went on smoothly and happily as heart could wish. My health was now perfectly re-established, and no obstacle existed to the completion of my wishes save what might arise from the "law's delay" in the due preparation of settlements, with all those provisoes respecting pinmoney and alimony, which, in what is termed high life, usually accompany matrimony, and which, in the joining two persons together for life, contemplate the extreme probability of their separating for ever.

Lord Manningham affected no unnecessary secrecy on this occasion, nor was Uncle Oliver the man to hide his candle under a bushel;—various paragraphs, therefore, soon found their way into different journals from the tradespeople employed on the wedding *paraphernalia*.—The *trousseau* of the bride, the equipage of the bridegroom, "the names of the horses and colours of the riders," were duly announced with all the pomp and circumstance usual on these occasions, and with a minuteness of detail as laudably accurate as that which had hereto-

fore blazoned forth the Ollapod livery "tastefully turned up with a rhubarb-coloured lapelle."

At length, after a proper proportion of these pilot-balloons had sufficiently informed the expectant public which way the wind was blowing, the Morning Post put forth the following clincher.

"H. M. S. the Superb, 74, Hon. Captain Loblolly, has been ordered round to * * *, where she will take on board the Right Reverend the new Bishop of Bengal. His Lordship was consecrated on Sunday the 4th instant, in the chapel appertaining to the Archbishopal Palace at Lambeth, and is about to embark forthwith, with his amiable family, for the important diocese over which he has been called upon to preside.

"On his way to the coast, his Lordship will visit Underdown Hall, the seat of Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, Bart. for the express purpose of solemnizing the marriage ceremony between Charles Stafford, Esq. nephew to the hospitable proprietor of the mansion, and his cousin, the

Hon. Amelia Stafford, the beautiful and accomplished heiress of Lord Viscount Manningham, K. B., late Governor General, &c. &c. &c.

“Immediately after the ceremony, the Right Rev. Prelate will proceed to the place of embarkation, while the happy couple will set out for Belvoir Abbey, on the banks of the Wye, the splendid domain recently purchased by the noble Nabob, from the heirs of the late Lord Cumberville.”

Three days subsequently, a Sunday Paper, piquing itself, and justly, on the priority of its intelligence, and the accuracy of its details, had a paragraph differing slightly from the former.

“The new Bishop of Bengal is, we are credibly informed, about to proceed to his diocese in the West Indies, where his Lordship has long been most anxiously expected, though we have good reason to believe that few persons till lately have been aware of his appointment.

“His Lordship will embark in the Skeleton hired transport, Captain Coffin, commander ;—and here we cannot help calling the attention of the

public to the disgraceful parsimony of Ministers in not placing a Government vessel at the Right Reverend Prelate's disposal ; — though, as profuse expenditure can never be justified, they are quite right after all in refusing to add to the burthens of the country for the convenience of a bloated hierarchy—unless indeed there should be good reason for the contrary,—which we are inclined to think may possibly be the case.

“ His Lordship has been for some time on a visit at Bullwinkle Place, the residence of Oliver Underdown, Esq. whose elegant and accomplished daughter is about to bestow her hand and immense fortune, including the fine estate of Thingumbob Hall,—bequeathed to her by her uncle the late Lord Thingumdiddle,—upon Viscount Manningham. Gunter has exhausted all his taste in the composition of the bridecake, which the Bishop probably took down with him in his carriage ;— unless, indeed,—as we have been assured is the case,—his Lordship on this occasion travelled down on horseback followed by a single groom.”

The former announcement of the two, if less

particular, was in substance the most correct. The Bishop was an old and valued friend of Lord Manningham, whose interest indeed had mainly contributed to his appointment ; and, as the state of my mother's health presented an impediment to her sanctioning our union with her presence in the metropolis, it had been determined that the ceremony should take place in the parish church of Underdown, the good prelate consenting, not without some personal inconvenience to himself, to deviate a few miles from his direct route to the coast, for the satisfaction of bestowing the nuptial benediction upon his patron's daughter.

The 10th of the month was the anniversary of my mother's birth, and this day, which had been fixed upon, at her request, to unite Amelia and myself, despite Time's ambling progress, at length arrived.

The sun rose fair and brilliant ; and if all nature did not absolutely "wear one universal grin" on the occasion, neither had we to accuse her of being a niggard of her smiles.

Sir Oliver was early in the field, ordering,

superintending, and confusing everything and everybody.—Miss Pyefinch was not idle; a handsome *déjeuner à la fourchette* was spread under her delegated auspices, and loaded the long table in the Cedar parlour, flanking which, stood her brother in full uniform;—a suit of regimentals that had long since fallen into desuetude, and which, from their cut, might have belonged to my Lord Ligonier, having been drawn forth from the very inmost recesses of the gallant officer's wardrobe for the purpose of doing honour to the day.

Four fine blood-horses, with a white favour at each ear, were champing their bits in the stable, impatient of delay, and eager for the moment when they should have the honour of whirling the bride and bridegroom over hill and dale;—the “handsome travelling barouche,” so glowingly described in Messrs. Honeyman's advertising paragraphs for the last fortnight, stood ready loaded, with imperial fixed, and all the baggage, save the lady's maid and her handboxes, properly adjusted. “The church was decked at morning tide;” the sconces were well

supplied with miniature *bouquets*, and the pews with expectant rustics, all curious to witness the "grand wedding." Within the belfry sat eight or ten "college youths," whose "united ages" amounted to Heaven knows how many centuries, all eager to ring out Heaven knows how many "triple-bob-majors;" while in front of the old ivied porch were ranged in two goodly rows, a pleasing sample of the village Ophelias, each with her basket of moral-bearing flowerets, blushing, giggling, and wondering "what could possibly make the gentle-folks so late;"—everybody in short was in a bustle, for everything had long been ready, but — an awful *but* on such an emergency — the clergyman !

It is recorded of an eminent practitioner of the art of abstraction, that when on his way to that fatal tree, where, as Mat Prior tells us,

"The Squire of the Pad and the Knight of the Post,
Find their pains no more baulk'd, and their aims no
more cross'd."

he addressed the crowd, which was running up Holborn Hill beside him, with all that *politesse*

which distinguished the golden age of thievery, an age when the coarse expression that so disgusted Juan,

“D—n your eyes, your money or your life!”

never disgraced the lips of a highwayman of any mark or likelihood; and when the Macleans and Duvals, whose loss posterity has so much reason to lament, would rather have left a man's brains unscattered, than have blown them out in a rude and indelicate manner — “Gentlemen,” said the professor alluded to, “pray do not hurry,—you will heat yourselves, and that most unnecessarily;—on my honour, *there will be no fun till I come!*” — Alack, that the good Bishop of Bengal did not despatch some monitory messenger fraught with a similar hint! What hurrying and scamperings, what wonderings, and toilings, and turmoilings, would not such a trifling attention on his part have prevented! — So at least though Sir Oliver.

As the special licence with which I was duly armed, did away with the necessity of attending to hours strictly canonical, one o'clock had been

the time fixed upon for the ceremony, our Right Reverend friend having promised to be with us before noon. But

“ The bell of the castle toll’d One,”

and the wheels of his chariot still tarried ;— the groom stationed, by way of outpost, at the head of the avenue, to telegraph his lordship’s appearance in the offing, still gazed and “ made no sign ;”—jellies and cold chicken stood untasted ;— Sir Oliver began to look fidgety, and the Captain voracious ; the eyes of the former oscillating between his watch and the window, those of the latter between a pyramid of prawns and a lobster salad.

The great clock that had for years enlivened the Hall with its tickings, now distinctly sounded Two !—The vibration served to unlock the lips of Miss Pyefinch, who, breaking the taciturnity which seemed to have hermetically sealed those of all the rest of the party assembled, gave vent in a whisper to a remark which, though neither very profound nor very original, was unquestionably both true and appropriate ; — she said, “ It was very odd ! ”

Sir Oliver gasped, and the Captain helped himself to a glass of Madeira, but neither replied; their looks, however, were so encouraging, that the lady ventured to follow up her observation with a hope that "nothing was the matter!"

The charm was now dissolved; every tongue recovered its functions, and it was unanimously resolved, in contradiction to her so kindly expressed wish, that "something *was* — that something *must be* the matter," and away dashed the Baronet, watch in hand, on a solitary visit to his sentinel, who still remained in warder guise, looking "as far as he could see."

The muttered ejaculation that escaped my Uncle as he sallied forth, satisfied me that the wish then uppermost in his mind was connected with the speedy translation of our Right Reverend friend to a diocese, even more sultry and extensive than the one just subjected to his pastoral superintendence. — I doubt whether at the moment I should myself have interposed a *veto* to the *congé d'elire*.

Our wedding party seemed now much in the same situation with that which the bard records to have been so unseasonably marred by a certain "Jock of Hazeldean," save that, fortunately for myself, the only personage missing was the bishop, and not the bride, who still remained closeted above stairs with my mother, and, of course, in a state of suspense rendered anything but enviable by this flagrant instance of episcopal remissness.

Lord Manningham himself had now become uneasy, and as another hour was by this time fast drawing to a close without any sign of the prelate's appearance, a serious inquiry ensued as to "What was to be done?"

The Viscount, expressing his fears that his Right Reverend friend had met with some accident, hinted at the necessity of a postponement of the ceremony. Against this measure, however, I entered my most vehement protest, suggesting, by way of *contre-projet*, that, as the parson of the parish could tie the nuptial knot quite as firmly, if not quite so handsomely, as his ec-

clesiastical superior, the services of our old acquaintance the Reverend Mr. Bustle should be put in requisition.

That learned and much esteemed gentleman was, of course, in attendance as an invited guest, and now readily proffered his assistance towards rescuing us from our dilemma, the prospect of officiating, indeed, seeming almost to console him for missing an introduction to so dignified a pillar of the Church.

The discussion waxed warm, and Miss Pyefinch was preparing to issue forth and summon Sir Oliver to "the talk," when a glance from the window showed us that personage returning to the house, and in company with a domestic in a sad-coloured livery, who led by the bridle-rein a hot and jaded steed, from which he seemed but just to have dismounted.

"News at last from the Bishop!" quoth Lord Manningham. — The Captain nodded. "Of course, then, we must not now expect him in person!" — The Captain shook his head, and helped himself to another bumper of Madeira.

When Sir Oliver entered the room, he bore an epistle in each hand ; the one was open, the seal of the other had not been broken. I saw at a glance that my good Uncle was in one of his old fits of mystified excitement.

"Why, what is the meaning of all this, Lord Manningham ? Is your confounded Bishop drunk or mad ?"

"Neither, I will venture to affirm," responded Lord Manningham gravely.

"Then, who the devil's Pumppe !" asked the Baronet.

"I know no such person," replied the Viscount.

"Why, zounds ! he's your very particular friend," shrieked Sir Oliver.

"I never heard the name before," said his Lordship.

"Then read your own letter, my Lord, and see if it will throw any light upon the cursed rigmorole stuff I have got here ; — as I am a living soul, I can't make head or tail of a single word of it."

The exhausted Baronet threw himself into

a chair, puffing like a stranded grampus, while the peer quietly received from his extended hand the proffered billet, which he unsealed, and retreated to the window to peruse ; meanwhile, I gently drew its fellow from my uncle's grasp, and, sanctioned by his mute permission, read it thus :—

“ SIR OLIVER,

“ Though personally unacquainted with you, I beg to express to every member of your family my sincere sympathy on an event so distressing to their feelings. Strong as his mind is, I tremble to think on the effect which the shock must have produced on poor Lord Manningham, though the fears of his friend, Sir Wiloughby Pumppe, have, I trust, exaggerated an evil in itself sufficiently formidable.

“ I would fain hope that the object of the infatuated girl's choice is not so utterly depraved as he has been led to believe. When his Lordship returns, pray take a proper opportunity to present the inclosed. You will agree with me, that, under the circumstances, my

presence at Underdown Hall would be not only useless, but distressing to all concerned ; I proceed, therefore, at once to the vessel in waiting for me.

“ As the wind is now fair, I dare scarcely hope for any farther intelligence before we sail, but I shall expect it with anxiety by the very first means of communication.

“ To the kind attentions of Sir Willoughby Pumppe and yourself, I commit my excellent friend with confidence, regretting that I am precluded from offering him my personal condolences ; and earnestly praying that he may be strengthened to support this heavy calamity.

“ Yours very faithfully,

“ GEO. BENGAL.”

No great degree of light, it must be confessed, was thrown upon the cause of his Lordship's absence by this mysterious missive, which might, in verity, have puzzled much wiser heads than that of Sir Oliver, and went far towards realizing the sarcastic simile of the satirist. “ As obscure as an explanatory note.”

From a review of the context in Lord Manningham's hands, however, better things were to be hoped ; and although after all attempts at elucidation, much remained to be guessed at, sufficient *data* were obtained from that quarter to satisfy every one that the Bishop had been victimized by some impudent impostor.

I shall not pretend to give the letter in detail, and for this piece of forbearance I claim the especial thanks of all who hate, as much as I do, closely written epistles of three sides and a postscript, particularly as, after all, it left a great deal to be inferred. Thus much was, however, perfectly clear from its contents.

A gentleman, or one whose outward man bespoke him such, had called at the Bishop's temporary abode in London, late on the day preceding that of his intended departure ;—he had announced himself as “ Sir Willoughby Pumppe,” and, after apologizing, in apparent agitation, for his intrusion at so unseemly an hour, had apprised his Lordship, that the whole family of “ his dear friend and relative Lord Manningham,” had just been thrown into

the greatest confusion and distress by the sudden elopement of the Hon. Miss Stafford with a *soi-disant* Polish count, a low fiddler, of the name of Wiskerewski, with whom she had unfortunately contracted an acquaintance soon after her arrival in this country.

By the aid of white teeth, black mustaches, paste shirt buttons, a profusion of rings and chains that would have put an Alderman to open shame, this person had succeeded, said "Sir Willoughby," in palming himself upon society as a nobleman expatriated for political offences, a sworn foe to autocrats, and a "martyr to the sacred cause of liberty."

The young lady, who was deeply read in the history of Thaddæus of Warsaw, wanted but a *chansonette* or two sung in a corner *sotto voce* to the guitar,—an accomplishment, by the way, in which his Countship beat Miss Porter's hero "all to sticks"—to surrender at discretion; and these were plentifully supplied. With a degree of finesse scarcely to be expected in one so young, and acquired no doubt from the lessons of *so* able a tutor, she had dissembled her disinclina-

tion to the match with her cousin, on which she knew her father had set his heart, till it was on the very eve of accomplishment, and had then taken advantage of a dark night, and four stout post-horses, to give her friends the slip.

The fugitives had been traced on their route to the sea-side, and Lord Manningham, accompanied by the deserted bridegroom, had gone in pursuit of them ; but, from the start which they had got, the vicinity of the coast, and the facility of communication with the continent, little hope was entertained of overtaking them on this side the Channel.

“ Sir Willoughby ” added, that, under these untoward circumstances, he had been deputed, as a near connexion of the family, to wait upon his Lordship, and to apprise him of an event which, so much to the affliction of all parties, would render his kind offices unavailing ; and expressed the greatest possible regret at having every reason to believe, from information recently received, that the rascally Wiskerewski, who had thus carried off his noble friend’s daughter, had not only been a hanger-on in a

low gaming-house with a Greek name, but had previously figured on the Continent as an escaped *Forçat*.

Such it appeared was the sum and substance of the communication made to the astounded prelate by Sir Willoughby Pumppe.

His Lordship, having dismissed his visitor, went to bed grieved and afflicted at the misfortune of his friend, and indignant at the villany of the seducer. He left London, of course, the next morning, according to his original design, as farther delay was impossible, even could his remaining in England a few days longer have allowed him to witness the termination of an affair in which he took so strong an interest.

His arrangements were, therefore, only so far countermanded as regarded his purposed deviation from the direct route to the seaport; and the hour which he had intended to pass at Underdown Hall was devoted to writing these manifestations of his sympathy from the nearest post-town, at which he rested a short time for that purpose.

These despatched, the Right Reverend the

Bishop of Bengal and suite proceeded leisurely on to * * *, where he was received with all due attention to etiquette by the Hon. Captain Loblolly, and, having embarked under a grand salute from a regulated number of guns, set sail "in H. M. S. the Superb, 74, for the important diocese over which he had been called upon to preside," to the immortal honour of the accuracy of the Morning Post's reporter, and perhaps a little to the discomfiture of his hebdomadal *collaborateur*, who, however, put a good face upon the matter, and thus revised his account for the ensuing Sunday.

"We announced in our last (exclusively) an approaching marriage in high life, which has since taken place. By an inadvertency we were led into a trifling error as to the name of the bride, who is the Honourable Amelia Manningham, daughter of Viscount Stafford, and who was on this happy occasion united in the flowery bands of Hymen to her only surviving relative Mr. Charles Bullwinkle, of Underdown Hall.

"The Bishop of Bengal did not, we

understand, perform the ceremony, having been obliged to depart for Bengal (which is not in the West, but in the East Indies, as our readers will find by referring to the map in Guthrie's Geographical Grammar), on the preceding evening. His Lordship sailed in the Superb, 74, Capt. Fuggles (and not in the Skeleton, Capt. Coffin, which is ordered to Demerara in New Brunswick, with overland despatches); the gratifying task consequently devolved upon the exemplary vicar of Underdown, the Rev. Timothy Bustle, D. D. late fellow of Oriel college, Cambridge, by whom the ceremony *was* performed; so that *we were right in the main*.

“The splendid *trousseau* of the bride is the admiration of all who have been so fortunate as to see it; we consider it *extremely wrong* thus idly to lavish on an individual what would support a hundred poor families for a twelvemonth, —but if the happy pair can by such an expenditure encourage industry, and put bread into the mouths of our starving manufacturers, we think, after all, that, nevertheless, they may very possibly be *quite right*.”

The developement of this extraordinary affair gave rise, as may well be imagined, to no slight discussion among the bridal party assembled in the Cedar parlour.

Vexed and indignant as we were, there was, after all, a something so ludicrous in our position, that, had I filled any other situation than that of bridegroom-elect, it is a hundred to one that I should not have been able to forbear laughing.

At this distance of time, when the annoyance is no longer felt, and the "old familiar faces" rise before my mind's eye, the compressed lip and flashing glance of the Viscount,—the incensed floridity of the Baronet's physiognomy,—Miss Pyefinch's "My goodness me!"—and Bustle's heartfelt "Bless my soul!" cannot but give to the muscles of my countenance an expression very different from that which they exhibited on the day in question.

The Captain was the only one who retained his perfect self-possession; the single word "Curious!" alone escaped his lips, as reverting to the table his eye most unequivocally demanded

— “ Since the Bishop will not be here, had we not better begin breakfast ! ”

But this was not yet to be. I now insisted on my former proposition with respect to the reverend rector’s assistance, to which little or no opposition was ultimately offered ; some slight excuse for the prelate’s absence was made to the bride, who had hitherto been kept in a laudable state of ignorance as to what was going on : and, before the gallant officer was allowed to masticate a single custard, that ceremony was performed, which, in our case, had begun,—as it always ends,—with “ amazement.”

I became the happy husband of my beautiful and blushing Amelia, despite the *laches* of the Bishop of Bengal, and the machinations of “ Sir Willoughby Pumppe.”

CHAPTER VII.

Go to, then !—we hope here be truths !

SHAKESPEARE.

The charge is prepared, the lawyers are met,
The judges all ranged — a terrible show !

GAY.

Monster, Away ! —
To the barren deserts fly !

Artaxerxes.

A MYSTERY.—A JOURNEY OF PLEASURE.—ANOTHER OF NE-
CESSITY.—A SYLLOGISM.—SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENT.—
—MAJOR, MINOR, AND CONSEQUENCE.—AN ASS AND A
BAND-BOX.—A WIG AND A PRIG.—SENIORS AND JUNIORS.
—ASSUMPTION,—PERSONATION.—RESIGNATION.—THE *ill*-
BRED DOG KICKED DOWN STAIRS.

SIR WILLOUGHBY PUMPPE !—Ay, where, who,
and what was Sir Willoughby Pumppe ?

This was a question much more easily asked
than answered :—who could he be ?—what

motive could he have for thus impeding a marriage, bothering a bishop, and throwing a whole family into confusion? — Pumppe? Lord Manningham had never heard the name, neither had Sir Oliver; it sounded low, vulgar, and monosyllabic, and savoured little of the equestrian dignity; but then the *prænomen* — Willoughby! — that at least was aristocratic, and the Baronet set himself down seriously to fathom the mystery.

Scarcely had the sound of the wheels that whirled the happy couple from the Hall sunk upon his ears, when, turning from the door whence he had waved them his farewell, Sir Oliver proceeded to what he somewhat humourously denominated his “Study.”

This was a large and well-proportioned room, which ran nearly the whole length of the south wing of the building, and, to say the truth, was much better furnished with books than the generality of manor houses even in the present day. It did not, to be sure, boast a Penny Magazine among its treasures, Sir Thomas More being the only chancellor whose works

had found a place upon its shelves ; — but then, — to say nothing of the whole law library of the learned Sir Marmaduke, replete with the Fletas, the Bractons, and the Cokes of former days, together with (Sir Oliver's magisterial oracle) Williams's edition of Burn's Justice,— a bachelor uncle of the present proprietor had devoted no inconsiderable portion of a younger brother's patrimony to the accumulation of the works of the best authors, ancient as well as modern. There had been an antiquary, too, in the family a century since, and many a rare and precious tome had Mr. Dugdale Bullwinkle there deposited, one glimpse of which would have smoothed the wrinkled front of a Ritson, electrified an Ellis, and made poor Tom Hill's * heart leap for joy.

But not to the illuminated missals, nor even to the Visitations and genealogies, still less to the

* " This is a tract of 1486—seventeen pages originally—five only wanting—two damaged—got it for seventy-two pounds ten shillings—Caxton—only one other copy extant—that in the British Museum."—" And what is it about ?" said I, innocently.—" Why, I do not happen to know *that*," said Hull (Hill)—" Then why buy it ?" said I.

classic productions of the Elzevir and Aldine presses, did Sir Oliver now incline. From a shelf near the fire-place, on which stood the "Burn's Justice" aforesaid, "Turpin's Farriery," the "Sporting Magazine," and a few other volumes which he sometimes opened on a rainy morning, he drew forth "Debrett," and commenced a determined consultation of his pages; but in vain did he ransack the "Baronetage," index included;—in vain was Townsend's "Catalogue of Knights," in its turn, subjected to the most scrutinizing examination;—Pumppees, indeed, he found, more or less illustrious, but not one rejoicing in the adjunct Willoughby.

After a two hours' application to every book in the room at all calculated to throw a light upon the object of his search, the persevering but baffled investigator was driven to

—"Buy!" exclaimed he, looking at me through his glass with an expression of astonishment—"I buy thousands of books!—pooh! pooh! millions, my dear Sir, in the course of a year,—but I never think of reading them. My dear friend, I have no time to read!"—Hook's *Gilbert Gurney*.

the conclusion that "the fellow was nothing else, after all, but a confounded humbug."

To Amelia and myself, meanwhile, the mystery was none. Fast as the flying steeds bore us from Underdown, they had not reached the first milestone on the London road, ere we had decided that the pseudo Mr. Stafford, James Arbuthnot, Esq., and Sir Willoughby Pumppe, were, as Mrs. Malaprop predicates of another impostor, "like Cerberus, three gentlemen in one," and all individualized in the person of my Cousin Nicholas.

Who but himself could have any object in delaying, perhaps breaking off, a marriage which he had already endeavoured to forestall?—Who but himself had "the heart to conceive, the head to contrive, and the *tongue* to execute" such a "jolly good hoax?"

The paragraph in the *Post* had evidently apprised him of our plans, and the necessarily immediate departure of the Bishop had given him a facility of defeating them. His own attempt at abduction would naturally suggest the story of the elopement, and he would rightly calcu-

late that, under the pressure of circumstances, no time would be left to the good prelate for investigation, even should any suspicion of deceit, —which was most unlikely,—arise in his mind. The disappointment, though but a temporary one, would be at once a revenge upon Amelia for her insensibility to his own *agréments*, a punishment to her father for turning him so uncere- moniously out of the house, and a serious an- noyance to myself, whom he had long honoured with an especial portion of his most particular and inveterate dislike.

All, or any, of these incitements were suf- ficient;—and then there was another, not less powerful, perhaps, than them all united —“it would be such desperate good fun!”

Of Nicholas and his pranks, however, I thought less and less every moment; and, though at first heartily provoked at his auda- city, as well as entertaining a firm resolution of one day visiting on his head the mischievous tricks he had perpetrated, the possession of Amelia made me too happy now to waste a thought on him or his impertinences.

Domiciled in a beautiful retreat, and enjoying all the charms of a picturesque neighbourhood, together with the more substantial comforts of a delightful home—above all things, happy in each other, — time flew over our heads on silken wings, and the very name and existence of my Cousin Nicholas had almost faded from our memories, when they were recalled to my recollection by a letter from my mother, containing intelligence of his recent expulsion from the University, and the great annoyance of Sir Oliver thereat.

The reader has not, as I would fain hope, forgotten a certain reverend gentleman, one Josiah Pozzlethwayte by name, whose skill in dialectics went so far in convincing my Uncle Oliver of the improbability of his son's having been in two different places at one and the same time.

Although a sense of justice towards his pupil, not altogether unmixed, perhaps, with an eagerness to vindicate his own superintending vigilance, had, on the occasion alluded to, induced this gentleman to advocate my Cousin Nicho-

las's cause with no common zeal, it must not be thence inferred that he was himself altogether satisfied with the general conduct of that ingenious individual, or violently enamoured of his society.

Few, indeed, of his pupils had, if the truth must be told, occasioned Mr. Pozzlethwayte greater trouble and inconvenience in his capacity of bear-leader. Not to mention that his almost total absence from the lecture-room, through constant indisposition (to attend), promised no great accession of fame to the tutor from the future reputation of the pupil, the frequent escapades of Nicholas, — who, as it was the Reverend Josiah's wont to aver, was "only regular in irregularity, and only consistent in his inconsistency," — annoyed him not a little in the situation which he held as a Senior Fellow of the College, and, of course, as a *consor morum*. — Nor did the evil stop here ; — he had strong personal grounds for objecting to his conduct.

Immense as were his intellectual advantages, personal beauty was not Mr. Pozzlethwayte's

forte. — He stood about four feet nothing in his stockings, a stature, which Nicholas once affirmed in his hearing, and upon Shakspeare's authority, to have been originally that of the whole human race, to prove which assertion he quoted Portia's declaration to Shylock, that

“ All the souls that are were *four feet* once ! ”

The vileness of the pun might perhaps have induced the learned gentleman, — who hated any approach to the *paranomasia* worse than all the other rhetorical figures put together, — to pardon it, as well as the impertinence in which it originated, but this was far from being a solitary instance of my Cousin's jocoseness at his expense ; a misfortune in early life had deprived him of one of those members which, as Mene-nius tells us, in his familiar assimilation of it to a leading demagogue, “ being one of the basest, lowest, poorest, yet goes first,” — he had lost his Great Toe !

This calamity, for such it proved, had not only given a certain peculiarity to his gait, but, from the dancing-master style of progression

which it occasioned, had procured him, at the hands of his unfriends, the *sobriquet* of "Pettitoe." — It was a point on which the nominee was peculiarly sensitive, and here again did Nicholas, to use his own expression, "touch him on the raw."

A sympathizing *Freshman*, on being informed one day that the loss had been occasioned by the carelessness of a grocer's foreman, who had let a hundred weight of Gloucester cheese fall upon his customer's foot, exclaimed in the simplicity of his heart, "Good Heavens! what a shocking accident!" "*Accident?*" quoth a *Man of Standing* — "Nay, no *Accident!* every body knows that a *Toe* is a *Substance*." — "Pardon me," interrupted Nicholas, "you must have read your Aristotle to very little purpose, gentlemen, if you are not aware that the great Stagyrice defines a *Substance* to be 'To or,' — now this, you will observe, is the very reverse of 'Toe on' — it is 'Toe off!'"

The syllogism was reported to its subject, by "some d—d good-natured friend," in less than half an hour from its construction.

But keenly as a *jou de mot* is felt by many, jokes of a more mechanical and practical nature are still less welcome, and these too were not wanting.

As if for the very purpose of counterbalancing the niggardliness of Nature by the resources of Art, Mr. Pozzlethwayte had endeavoured, as it were, to atone for the deficiency of one extremity by the redundancy of the other; a magnificent peruke was his crowning glory, similar in form, and not at all inferior in bulk, to that which erst distinguished the renowned and self-be-praised scholar, whose adoption has stamped upon these horse-hair *tumuli* the designation of "*Parriak* Wigs." The amplitude of its projections seemed to set all the laws of gravity,—in every sense of the word,—at defiance, and affected the mind of the spectator with an unpleasant sensation, similar to that produced by a first view of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. The observer was involuntarily impressed with an idea of the impossibility that such a superstructure, so totally at variance with every rule of architecture, and

one the *apex* of which so much exceeded its base, could long preserve any position at all approaching to the perpendicular; at the same time its hue, and the general appearance exhibited by the woolly Acropolis six days out of the seven, made the feeling heart shudder at the probable loss of life which must necessarily attend its descent. Once a-week, however, its snowy brilliance rivalled that of Mont Blanc itself, and gave it the appearance of an impending *avalanche*.

Every Sunday morn, exactly as St. Mary's clock announced the hour of nine, did Giles Gutteridge, the stammering tonsor, emerge from his domicile in Holywell, furnished with a huge band-box, whose interior seemed bursting with the hairy wonder it contained, newly befrizzled and *poudré à la merveille*.

Now, it so happened that its owner's apartments were situated on the first floor of that side of the quadrangle which immediately fronted the gateway; it is evident, therefore, that the bearer would have to traverse one half the square before he could possibly reach them;

whereas Dr. Battles, the bursar, occupied rooms on the northern side, at a right angle with those of his friend, and, as he regularly shaved on Sundays, it was Mr. Gutteridge's professional duty to look in, on his way, and operate on the reverend functionary's chin.

On all such occasions, it was the wont of the unsuspecting barber to deposit his freight, for the nonce, upon the landing-place, outside his customer's "Oak," for the ten minutes during which he was employed within.

The sun shone clear as usual, no thunder growled, no earthquake shook the Radcliffe to its base, no awful prodigy announced impending calamity, neither were heard

"The grass-plot chains in boding notes to ring," *

when one fine morning, the hebdomadal abrasion duly performed, a cold chill struck to the very marrow of Gutteridge as he resumed his load ; — the box rose in his grasp light as a feather.

To remove the lid was the work of an in-

* Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonari

Verbera, tum stridor ferri, tractusque catenas.

V180.

stant — it was so ! — his most horrible anticipations were fearfully realized — *abii ! excessit ! evasit ! erupit !* — the wig was gone !

For one moment the unhappy one stood paralysed — the next, two steps, each five times as long as those ordinarily taken by

“Such men as walk in these degenerate days,”

brought him down two flights of stairs, and placed him in the very centre of the Quadrangle.

The Reverend Mr. Pozzlethwayte was at this precise instant of time busily engaged in winding up the peroration of a discourse to be delivered that very morning at St. Mary's ; — his Muse — I cannot at this moment call to mind the name of the individual among the “tuneful Nine,” who acts as the Pierian inspirer of pulpit oratory — had been unusually costive, and an unwonted stagnation of ideas had already made him long for the *avatar* of Gutteridge.

It is recorded of a celebrated Counsel, learned in the law, that he could never plead to any good purpose without a piece of string to twine round his finger while he was addressing the court — Mr. Pozzlethwayte could never compose

without his wig. While yet in the very act of consulting his watch, and wondering at the tardiness of his decorator,

“Strange sounds of grief, lamentations heard i’ the air,”

struck on his sensorium;—he rose and applied himself to the window, when, in the very centre of the grass-plot, irreverently trampling on that sacred sod, fenced in by privilege from every tread less hallowed than that of a Senior Fellow, stood, —or rather stamped,—the infuriate Gutteridge, writhing in all the contortions of demoniacal possession.—His uplifted hands and eyes seemed as they were invoking the vengeance of all the Gods on somebody —or something, —but on whom, or what, remained a mystery.

The learned Tutor threw up the sash, and called loudly on the infuriated *Tonsor* for an explanation.

It has been already hinted that Mr. Gutteridge had, like another great orator of antiquity, a slight impediment in his speech—“Wi—wi—wi—wi—wi!”—was all that could be collected from him by his interrogator, till, raising his

eyes in the direction in which the outstretched arms of the supposed maniac were pointing, a sight arrested them which froze his heart within him.

There was the Wig!—*his* Wig—*THE* Wig, *par excellence*, of the whole University, enshrouding the temples of the first Murderer, whose stony brow seemed to derive tenfold rigidity from the addition, while,—such fantastic tricks does Fancy play us,—a lively imagination might have traced a horrid laughter mingling with the convulsions of the expiring Abel, while even the noble and noseless Alfred, and

“Thy grim-bearded Bust, Erigena!”*

seemed to grin in ghastly glee from their elevation above the buttery hatch.

“The Wi—wi—wi—wi!”—still shrieked the frantic tonsor, but,

“Ere he could achieve the word proposed,”

Pozzlethwayte was already by his side, cravat-less, hat-less, trencher-less,—and, alas! wig-

* Heber.

less ;—in all the unreadiness of college *déshabille*, and presenting,—as my Cousin Nicholas, who was quietly contemplating the scene from his window, very classically observed,—“the *beau idéal*, in every thing but size, of a

‘*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui Wiggum ademptum!*’”

The porters were by this time alarmed, and one of the most agile among them, climbing up the pedestal, set his foot on Abel's shoulder, and stretched out his hand to secure the ravished peruke that frowned far, far above the reach of its bereaved owner ; but whether *Æolus* owed the Tutor a spite, or that the “Little Breezes” seized on this opportunity of avenging themselves for their constant exclusion from his chambers, the motion, occasioned by the removal of the caxon, fanned into activity the embers of a half-extinguished cigar, which had been for some time smouldering among the bushy thickets of its *occiput*.

“Where there is so much smoke there must be some fire,” was the logical deduction of the Scout, and, as he paused to examine, the truth

of his inference was demonstrated by almost instantaneous ignition. Two or three slaps with the wig, vigorously inflicted on the back of Cain, at length extinguished the flame; but serious, not to say irreparable, damage had already been done to the comatose fabric, which still hissed, and curled, and fizzled, and sent forth odours the farthest in the world from Sabæan.

To preach before the assembled Heads of Houses in a jasey that looked and smelt like a singed sheep's head, was impossible, and, as no substitute could be found *sur le champ* for the dilapidated wig, its discomfited proprietor was obliged to seek a deputy for the preacher.

But who was the nefarious depredator?—Who the perpetrator of all this villany?—Of that no proof could be obtained, though diligently sought for. General suspicion, unquestionably, pointed at Nicholas, who had been seen in the Quad when Gutteridge was entering it, and who had even asked that individual, “H—h—h—how he d—d—did!” a sympathetic hesitation in delivery seeming to have

seized upon him in the very moment of inquiry. But he had passed on, as he declared, to his own rooms;—nobody could gainsay the fact, and moreover, he denied all knowledge of the larceny “upon his honour;”—such an averment it were heresy to doubt; still, from the undisguised amusement which he had exhibited at the window, and his subsequent introduction of a song at “the Phoenix,” which was considered to bear upon the subject, the injured Pozzlethwayte was convinced that, if not a principal in the robbery, he was at least *particeps criminis*, and “an accessary before the fact.”

“The Wig’s the thing!—the Wig,—the Wig,—
 The Wig’s the thing!—the Wig,—the Wig;
 When portly parsons claim the pig,
 And gouty aldermen look big,
 I do not say they are not wise,—
 I only say, in vulgar eyes
 The wisdom’s in the Wig!”

(*Grand Chorus of Under Graduates.*)

“The Wig!—the Wig!—the Wig!—the Wig!—
 The wisdom’s in the Wig!!”

“Such were the sounds that o’er the crested

pride" of Josiah Pozzlethwayte "scattered wild dismay," as he returned, a day or two afterwards, from evening chapel. The windows of the *Symposium* were all open, every syllable came o'er his ear, not indeed

" Like the sweet South,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,"

but with a distinctness of articulation which it needed not the remembrance of his misfortune to render complete. The voice of my Cousin Nicholas, — the *primo tenore*, — sounded high above the rest in beautiful intonation; — the victim even fancied he saw him peeping at him over the blinds; — from that moment all his doubts were merged in certainty, and dislike was converted into a sentiment that approximated as nearly to hatred as such a passion can be supposed to exist in "a celestial breast."

"It is easy," says a homely proverb, "to find a stick to beat a dog;" besides, when one has positively determined that, right or wrong, the cur shall not escape castigation, a cudgel is generally kept handy. It was scarcely necessary to make occasions for complaint

against my Cousin ;—alas ! he was in the habit of affording but too many ready made ;—and it soon became apparent that a war to the knife was raging, if not openly proclaimed, between tutor and pupil.

“Crosses” and “Impositions” fell thick on the devoted head of Nicholas, who revenged himself, as best he might, by a corresponding shower of lampoons.

To this species of weapon, certain anecdotes and adventures related of Mr. Pozzlethwayte’s *première jeunesse*, rendered him peculiarly obnoxious, and “a column of advertisements from the *Times*, to be rendered into Latin verse,” inflicted upon my Cousin, was followed by a discharge of odes and epigrams, supposed to be the production of the same pen.

There was, in the days of which I speak, a *locale* in every College which corresponded, in some of its uses,—it had others—with the *Pasquin* and *Marforio* of Rome, and, as the great majority of resident members were in the habit of resorting thither, at least, once a-day, few better opportunities of disseminating

anonymous effusions could be found, than by means of an *affiche* in a situation so frequented.

Here then, did the lines alluded to constantly appear. The allusions were generally caught up; copies of the different squibs multiplied apace, and the same "good-natured friend," of whom I have before spoken, usually placed them, with a most praiseworthy regularity, on the table of the Reverend Josiah.

Conjecture again fixed on Nicholas as the author, but again nothing appeared in the copies positively to fasten on him the imputation, — and it was considered *infra dig.* for a Senior Fellow to visit the originals, for the purpose of identifying the hand-writing; — a fallacious test after all.

The campaign was at length rather unexpectedly brought to a close, and my Cousin Nicholas, like many a great man before him, was finally defeated — by wine. In his sober senses he would have defied a world in arms, but "he, whom nor storms nor shipwreck could subdue," fell prostrate, alas! before a batch of Burgundy.

My Cousin Nicholas had procured from the vaults of the immortal Latimer a choice case of "genuine Chambertin;" — the conventional name for a mixture of brandy and red-ink, then in high estimation among Gentlemen Commoners — a dozen of his allies were summoned, and "to it they went like French falconers;" for all who remember our Universities a quarter of a century ago, will bear sorrowful testimony to the occasional excesses, the computations, and the revellings within those sacred walls, where now, in accordance with the better spirit of modern times, and to the everlasting honour of Father Mathew, the "men" quaff chiefly from those

"Cups that cheer but not inebriate,"

and only

"Let the *buttered* toast go round."

As none of my Cousin's party were unpractised hands, their *soderunt* was a protracted one.

Towards midnight the mirth grew fast and furious, when Pozzlethwayte, whose ears were

invaded by the sound of their orgies, meditated an assault. He had even made his *sortie*, taken the stairs by *escalade*, and was about to dash in upon the garrison, sword (trencher) in hand, when, as his fingers yet grasped the handle of the door, the portentous sound of

“ If any presume
To come into the room,
We’ll fling the dog out of the window ! ”

echoed as an *antistrophe* by half-a-score voices in *alt*, gave him pause ; — Minerva, in the shape of cool reflection, came to his aid, and threw her protecting *ægis* around him. Gently and imperceptibly did his grasp relax, — softly, as one who treadeth on eggs, did he retrace his way across the quadrangle, and

“ With uneven footstep press the sod,”

till he reached the sanctuary of his own apartment.

Not so Nicholas and his pot-companions ; — On they went, pouring the enemy into their mouths “ to steal away the brains ” of those

who were possessed of such a commodity, till, as is not uncommon with persons puffed up, whether by wine or vanity, a general vituperation of "things as they are," was succeeded by an eager longing after "things as they ought to be."

The Grass-plot! — what a piece of "ecclesiastical tyranny" that none should be allowed to tread upon it under the degree of A. M.! — what a piece of folly that it should be a grass-plot at all! — a useless, uncropped, four-cornered bit of pasture! — browsed by no herd, — enamelled with no flock! — wasting its 'greenery' on the desert air, and altogether unprofitable to man and beast.

"Then, too, the miserable and stunted shrubs that deformed the Principal's garden! — green to no purpose, — fragrant to no end; — who saw them? — who enjoyed them? — No one, — or next to none. — It was a wanton waste of the gifts of Nature — the thing must be reformed! — aye, Radical Reform! that was what was wanting!" —

And accordingly the "New, Grand, Bota-

nico-horticultural and Agricultural Society of King's Hall and College of Brasenose" was established on the spot, with my Cousin Nicholas for its President.

Sofas from the neighbouring rooms were put in instant requisition, and formed admirable substitutes for ploughs and drills to break up and convert the much abused pasture into arable land; while the laurels, myrtles, with such other shrubs as were not too firmly imbedded in the soil for ready extraction, yielded to the united energies of the "Reforming Committee," and, instead of languishing as heretofore in isolated insignificance, formed, when duly arranged against the Vice-Principal's door, a bower, scarce inferior to that of our first parents' in Paradise, as described by the immortal Milton.—In one respect it may even be said to have had the advantage over it;—Adam's "Proud Alcove" was altogether innocent of candles, but here were lights innumerable;—wax from the rooms,—lamps from the stairs,—lanterns from —nobody knows where:—the very scout's "muttons" were called into play,

till the "enterprising Mr. Gee" himself, could he have witnessed the brilliance of this Academic Vauxhall, would have confessed himself outdone, and have blushed to charge "a shilling" for the inferior glories of his gala nights.

Alas! alas! why is it that all human joys are so evanescent? why is it that we find them ever

" Like clouds that tint the morning skies,
As bright—as transient too?"

The "bright clouds" of the poet had hardly begun "to tint the morning skies" at all, when an irruption of the College Janissaries disturbed the philanthropists in the very height of their enjoyment. They who could run did run,—they who could not run fell,—and were picked up again; while my Cousin Nicholas, their illustrious President and Arch-Reformer, covered with grease and glory, was captured and conducted to his couch, hiccuping as he sank into the arms of Morpheus,

"What have we with day to do?—(hic—)
Sons of Care,"—(hic!)—

mind you put out the lights, you d—d rascals!"

My Cousin Nicholas had now reached the zenith of his academical career, and we have henceforward only to

“Mark the mild lustre that gilt his decline !”

On awaking the next morning he found, Wolsey-like, that a killing frost had nipped his root, that he, “good easy man,” was about to fall “never to rise again”—in Oxford ; — therefore, with all that firmness of purpose, and promptness of decision, which are the distinguishing characteristics of great minds, he resolved so to dispose his robe as to fall with dignity.

A summons before the Seniority he anticipated, nor did he deceive himself as to its necessary result. But the emergency found him not unprepared for it ; he had long since contemplated the possibility of such an event taking place, and his mighty soul rose equal to the occasion.

It was past one o'clock p. m.—The various classes had been dismissed, and the Common Room already exhibited his

“Judges all met, a terrible show.”

At the upper end of the apartment sat the Principal, and the Fellows were arranging themselves to his right and left according to their standing.—The immediate appearance of the delinquents,—for two other of the rioters were included in the same bill of attainder, — was expected, when the door opened, and Sir Lawrence O'Thwackes and Mr. St. John Gomerrily, Gentlemen Commoners both, entered the room.

My Cousin Nicholas did not appear, but the space he should have filled was occupied by the Rev. Josiah Pozzlethwayte in person, who, acting as “bodkin” to the other two, advanced with them, in his usual saltatory style, to the bottom of the table.

His unexpected appearance in such a situation arrested the embryo rebuke already trembling on the lips of the Principal. That dignitary gazed on the apparition before him with astonishment. One instant previous he had been consulting with the very gentleman now *vis-à-vis* to him, and had received his vote for the ostracism of all the offenders.—How he could have left the room in the interval

was amazing !—Yet there he stood,—arrayed in his snuff embrowned suit of sables, with wig, green goggles, and pointed toe,—perfect in his individuality.

An exclamation from his right drew off the President's attention ; he turned, and, to his consternation,—I will not say horror,—beheld there another Pozzlethwayte !—*alter et idem* ! —in wig,—in goggles,—and in toe he was the same,—but evidently quivering with suppressed agitation, while his “double,” at the other end of the room, stood regarding the scene with the most complacent equanimity.

“Bless me ! what can be the meaning of all this ?” asked the astounded “Head.”

“*Mon Dieu ! il y en est deux !*” quoth the junior Fellow, as he quoted the despairing exclamation of the French profligate.

“Bless my heart !”—“why, Mr. Pozzlethwayte !”—“why, who on earth is this ?”—&c. &c. &c.—burst simultaneously from different members of the congress as the Seniority rose in confusion ;—meanwhile the two accused, and their extraordinary middle-man, preserved

their composure, and appeared to be the only unembarrassed persons in the whole assembly.

The *agitated* Pozzlethwayte at length found voice, and, pointing to Pozzlethwayte the *composed*,

“See!” he exclaimed, “see, gentlemen!—I knew how it would be!—it is all a part of the system—all done to harass and annoy *me*—I was sure it would be so”——

“What is the meaning of this absurd masquerade?” interrupted the Principal, now thoroughly certified by the voice as to which was the real Simon Pure;—“who are you, Sir?—and where is Mr. Bullwinkle?”

“Here, Sir, at your orders,” returned the fictitious Pozzlethwayte, reverently bowing as he raised his glasses, and darting from beneath them glances of tenfold obliquity upon the company.

“What do you mean, Sir, by presenting yourself in this ridiculous dress?”

“Ridiculous?—pardon me, Sir,” replied Nicholas, with much seeming humility, “I have, I regret to say, too often been reproved for

unintentional violation of the University costume, and a *Cross* was placed against my name no longer ago than last week on that very account, by my respected tutor who now sits beside you ; — I have since determined to make him my model in dress, as in everything else, — and, to say the truth, my friends flatter me by declaring that I have succeeded indifferently well.”

The cool impudence of this reply was not to be borne ; — the Seniority rose *en masse*, and soon after broke up “in much admired disorder.”

Mr. Bullwinkle and his tittering companions were in the meantime ordered to withdraw, and in the course of the day received jointly and severally, an official intimation that they “were no longer to consider themselves members of that University.”

And so my Cousin Nicholas took his leave of Oxford.

HIC CESTUS ARTEMQUE REPONIT !

CHAPTER VIII.

—— The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
Macbeth.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child !
Lear.

——
A BARONET IN A PUCKER—IN A COFFIN.—GRIEF AND
REMORSE.—TOO LATE !—RESUSCITATION.

SIR OLIVER'S wrath was, as I well knew it would be, fearful ; — sentence of the greater excommunication and perpetual banishment was forthwith pronounced against the principal offender. I say the principal, because, although Nicholas unquestionably came in for the chief portion of his indignation, yet the various members of the " Seniority " were by no means absolved in his estimation. They had disgraced

a Bullwinkle ! and that act, whether done justly or unjustly,—with or without a sufficing reason — was, in the eyes of the representative of the redoubted Roger, nothing less than a high crime and misdemeanour. .

Letters which we received about this time, both from my mother and Miss Pyefinch, concurred in representing the Baronet as having been in a state of continued excitement, almost amounting to frenzy, from the moment of his receiving the Principal's official notification of the removal of his son's name from the books, together with a statement of the cause of his having been thus unceremoniously sent to the right about.

All this I fully expected to hear, but, I own, I was not prepared for the shock which followed, and which exhibited to me the misconduct of Nicholas in still more glaring colours.

His follies and improprieties had at length made him little less than a parricide ; and, as I read the following paragraph from a London journal, which I took up accidentally at a little inn in the Isle of Wight, whither Amelia and

myself had gone on a short excursion, I was not more grieved at the event which it announced, than shocked by the conviction that his son's misbehaviour had broken the poor old gentleman's heart.

At the head of the list of deaths was—

“ Suddenly, of apoplexy, at his seat, Underdown Hall, Kent, Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, Bart., in the sixty-third year of his age. He is succeeded in his title and estates by his only son and heir, now Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle.”

Poor Sir Oliver ! — This, then, was the end of all his hopes and fears— of all his cares and anxieties for the welfare of one who had as surely destroyed him as if he had plunged a knife into his bosom !

Poor Uncle Oliver !—Till this moment I had never known how much I had loved him. To me his kindness had been, from the very first, as warm as it was undeviating ; and I well knew that in his affections I held a place second only to that so unworthily occupied by his heartless offspring.

The date of the announcement was that of

the third day after we had quitted the Abbey, on the little tour I have alluded to, and where, I doubted not, full details of the melancholy event were even at this moment awaiting my return. But my course was already determined on; and, crossing over that very day to Portsmouth, I sent Amelia home under the protection of her servants, and placing myself in the mail, reached London at an early hour on the following morning.

Notwithstanding his eccentricities, my mother was, as I well knew, deeply, fondly attached to her departed brother, and would at such a time need all the consolation a son's attentions could bestow. Besides, Underdown Hall was now the property of my Cousin Nicholas; and under any roof which called him master, I was certain she would not choose to remain one moment longer than might be absolutely necessary.

I had partaken of some slight refreshment at the hotel, and had ordered a chaise and four to be got in readiness as quickly as possible, while I just stepped out to give my tailor some

orders, rendered necessary by the melancholy event that had occurred, when, as I turned the corner of Sackville Street, my arm was grasped from behind.

I stopped, and beheld my Cousin Nicholas himself.

He was dressed in deep mourning ; and, to do him justice, I never saw grief and affliction more strongly depicted in any one's countenance in my life. It was some time before he could find words to address me ; they seemed, like Macbeth's, to "stick in his throat," and the big drops stood on his forehead, while a convulsive choking appeared to impede his utterance. The encounter was an unexpected one to both of us, and, to me at least, unwelcome. I gazed at him in silence : tears at last came to his relief. —"Charles !" he exclaimed, in a voice scarcely audible from emotion, "for Heaven's sake, pity me !—I have murdered my poor father !"

Incensed against him as I was, and not without reason, on my own account, there was a something so truly pitiable in his whole appearance, in the misery expressed by his glazed

eye and hollow cheek, that, spite of myself, I could not look at him without feeling my anger sensibly giving way to compassion. It was not at such a moment, at all events, that I could dwell on personal injuries ; it was no time for revenge, or for heaping reproaches on one whom the bitterest remorse had already stricken to the earth. I took Sir Nicholas by the arm, and retraced my steps with him to the Clarendon.

When at length his emotion permitted him to speak, I learned that he had but just arrived in town, having preceded me to London by little more than twenty-four hours.

On leaving the University, he told me he had taken up his temporary abode with his friend Hanbury, in Sussex, where he had intended to remain till time and the mediation of friends should so far induce his father's wrath to relax, as to hold out to him some hope of a reconciliation. The absurdity of his late conduct, and the injury done by it to his own character and prospects in life, had, as he assured me, already made a very strong impression upon him ; the lesson he had received had not been thrown away ; and

he had fully made up his mind to discard his follies, abandon his mischievous frolics for ever, and to do everything in his power towards regaining the place which he felt he had forfeited, both in society, and in the affections of his friends.

“Incredible as you may perhaps think it, Cousin Charles,” he added, “it was on yourself that I placed my firmest reliance. — To you I have much to answer for — more perhaps than you are even now aware of. I have acted by you like a scoundrel and a madman — yet on you, I repeat, I had rested all my hopes of obtaining my father’s forgiveness, and the pardon of others whom I have still more grossly sinned against. Grave cause as you have against me — for I know you too well to suppose I could make you more than temporarily my dupe — I had made up my mind to write to you — to throw myself on your mercy — to confess to you the whole of my folly, — my madness, — and to plead the only, the miserable excuse that exists for my infatuated conduct when, to

my utter consternation, the papers informed me of the deplorable ——”

He covered his face with his hands, burst into a flood of tears, and seemed as if he would have knelt before me.

I shrank from so degrading an act of self-abasement, and, in a tone which, I fear, had at least as much of contempt as pity in it, desired him to compose himself.

My Cousin Nicholas would have proceeded to confession, but I stopped him at once with the remark, that other matters had at present a prior demand on the attention of both of us.

He had come, as I now found, to London immediately, on reading the account of his father's decease in the papers, and had already employed the time during which he had been in town in despatching the necessary tradesmen and orders to the Hall, for the performance of the late Baronet's obsequies, in a manner suitable to the rank and station which he had so recently held in the county. Having

just completed his arrangements, he was about to proceed to Underdown, when he saw me pass a shop, in which he was making the last purchases requisite for his journey, and arrested my progress as I have mentioned.

Finding that I was myself about to proceed to the same destination, he now requested to be permitted to accompany me down, adding, that it would give him the opportunity for which he so earnestly longed, of making his avowal, and of affording to me and mine all the reparation yet in his power.

After some little hesitation, I agreed to his proposal, and having briefly written to my several tradesmen such directions as were necessary, we stepped into the chaise, which was waiting for me, and set out together at a rapid pace for the Hall.

Scarcely were we fairly launched from the stony breakers of Bond Street, into the smooth water of Macadamization, when my Cousin Nicholas began, as he phrased it, "to make a clean breast of it," and with every token of

sincere contrition, went into a recapitulation of his offences against us all.

He told me, that at our never-to-be-forgotten interview with her at the theatre, the impression made upon him by Amelia's beauty was not inferior to that which it had produced upon myself—that he had, in short, to use his own expression, “fallen deeply, madly in love with her at first sight;” but that this passion, like many of a similar kind which had preceded it, might perhaps have yielded to time and absence, had not a combination of fortuitous circumstances occurred to foster and increase its force.

It will be recollected, that on parting with me in Jermyn Street,—after I had, as we both then thought, safely marked down my bird at Mrs. Morgan's,—Nicholas had repaired to what—such is the retrogression of modern refinement—*may* now be mentioned, even to ears polite, as a “Hell,” in the vicinity.

The usual flocks of rooks and pigeons were found congregated within its interior, and, flush

with the supply so recently received from myself, he plunged at once into all the mysteries of *rouge et noir*.

A very few deals had taken place, when an "intelligencer" entered with the news of an attack meditated by the police, and appointed to take place that very night. The party broke up abruptly, and Nicholas, who had been hitherto a winner, and was not sorry for so good an excuse to pocket his earnings, found himself once more in the street.

As he passed Mrs. Morgan's door, the often-mentioned dark green chariot caught his eye, with Amelia and her antiquated *chaperon* in the act of getting into it.

The real state of the case flashed at once upon him, and as the carriage drove leisurely along, he had no difficulty in keeping it in view, till he saw it finally deposit its lovely freight at her father's mansion.

His first impulse was, as he assured me, to make me acquainted with the discovery. but, alas, the event proved that the warning of the bard is not an idle one—

“ Friendship, take heed !—if woman interfere,
Be sure the hour of thy destruction’s near ! ”

After what he declared to have been a very severe struggle, passion prevailed over principle, and my Cousin found himself unable to renounce the advantage which his knowledge of the residence of our fair *incognita* gave him over me, his rival.

When he had ascertained the real name and condition of the lady, and her relationship to myself,—all which he had accomplished, without difficulty, during the interval of my journey to Underdown,—the struggle, he protested, recommenced, and when, on the evening of my return to town, I had made him my confidant with respect to Lord Manningham’s intentions in my favour, the secret was actually upon his lips.

But my evil Genius, it seems, again prevailed, and accident again secured his triumph.

“ How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done ! ”

“Had you not incautiously let fall that letter of your mother’s, Cousin Charles, I verily believe I should yet have proved honest to you, and, after diverting myself a little longer with your perplexities, have at once removed them; but the temptation was irresistible.—One moment only was your attention distracted by the waiter, but that moment was decisive—to seize,—to exchange the letter for one of my own, was the work of an instant;—the hurry with which you followed me in pursuit of an *ignis fatuus*, conjured up, I confess, for my purpose, forbade all examination, and I saw, with triumph, that my hastily formed plan had succeeded; the substituted epistle was already in your pocket.

“A thousand and a thousand times during the remainder of that day did conscience fly in my face, and tell me that I was acting most unworthily;—a thousand times did I resolve to confess all to you, to restore the letter I had purloined, and trust to your affection for my pardon; but then the image of Amelia rose in beauty before me,—and the die was cast.

“With my subsequent conduct you must be but too well acquainted ; its only palliation is, that I was no longer my own master ; every thought, every feeling of right and wrong, was absorbed in the one hope of obtaining, by any means, the paragon of her sex.

“A very few days, as I was well assured, were all that would be afforded me, ere the imposture must inevitably be discovered ; my own imprudence contributed to shorten even that brief interval, and, in a moment of infatuation and despair, I was hurried into that Quixotic enterprise which infatuation and despair alone could have inspired.”

“Nay,” he continued, “I will own, that, from the date of my more intimate acquaintance with Miss Stafford and her perfections, the strongest personal jealousy of yourself was added to my other bad passions ; and this, together with the envy at your good fortune which it excited, induced me subsequently to play off a most abominable trick upon the Bishop of Bengal, which would, as I hoped,

have the effect of deferring, if only for a few hours, a marriage so destructive to all my hopes, and one which I could not bear to think upon.

“ But oh ! Charles,” continued he, seeing my colour rising, for my patience here was sorely tried, “ spare me,—spare me, I beseech you, the reproaches which I so justly merit ; think,—think what my feelings must be at such a moment as this, when I avow that, guilty as I have been towards you, there is another crime that lies yet heavier on my heart,—my poor, poor father !—yes, Charles, it is but too true that the individual who so atrociously insulted him was his own son ! ”

“ I had not, I scarce need say, quitted London as you believed, but had accompanied Captain Hanbury, the brother of a college friend of mine, to the theatre, when, to my astonishment no less than alarm, I came plump upon Sir Oliver ;—I knew all the consequences of his finding me in London ;—I knew the violence of his anger when thoroughly provoked ; not an instant was

left me for consideration,—What was to be done!—I denied, disowned, gracious Heaven!—I even threatened him!”

A violent burst of anguish here interrupted the speaker, nor could I help being moved by the bitterness of his remorse.

Resentment again gave way to compassion; I could not—no, I *could* not trample on the self-abased creature beside me, I could not quench the smoking flax, nor bruise the broken reed:—he had behaved scandalously, it is true, but he was miserable—the image of his dead father, too,—of that father who had so loved us both, seemed to rise between us, and demand forgiveness for his erring but repentant child.

Before we had reached Dartford I had solemnly accorded to my Cousin Nicholas an entire amnesty, and had ventured to promise him as much on the part of Amelia.

From this moment I endeavoured to change the subject, and to converse with him on his own affairs—on his future plans and prospects

—but found it exceedingly difficult to withdraw his mind at all from the course of bitter self-reproach which his thoughts had taken.

He was perpetually reverting to the subject of the disgraceful conduct he had pursued towards his father.

A chaise and four, he told me, and the connivance of the college porter, had enabled him to anticipate the arrival of Sir Oliver in Oxford,—which he was sure would follow,—by several hours, and, secure in the secrecy of his friend the Captain, who had promised to keep out of the way for a day or two, he had managed to escape detection by the connivance of the College servants;—but the remembrance of his behaviour on that occasion to a parent who so doted on him would, he continued to assure me, embitter every moment of his future existence. He spoke of himself as of one of the worst of murderers, and it was almost impossible to divert him from these gloomy reflections, or to draw his attention to the state of his worldly concerns.

From what at length fell from him, however,

I gathered that his pecuniary embarrassments were in fact much more considerable than I had anticipated ; he even hinted at the probability that a temporary visit to the Continent might be advisable, if not absolutely necessary.

This was an idea which I rather encouraged than repressed ; as, though I had made up my mind not to refuse my assistance towards extricating him from his difficulties, it struck me that, for many reasons, his absence from England, for the present, would be a relief to all parties.

When we reached Sittingbourne, we stopped to change horses and alighted to partake of some refreshment at the Rose, and here,—as as I verily believe for the first time in his life,—did the appetite of Nicholas altogether fail him ;—he forced down a mouthful or two with difficulty, and remained totally absorbed in his own thoughts, which continued to be apparently of the most painful description ; what was yet more extraordinary he did not show the slightest inclination to fly to his old resource, the bottle, for relief, nor was it with-

out great persuasion on my part that he was at length, with difficulty, induced to swallow a single glass of sherry:—I wanted no other proof of the sincerity of his grief,—at least for the time being.

At a short distance below the village above named, the approach to the Hall diverged from the great turnpike road to Dover, and turning abruptly to the right, after meandering for several miles through a rich and varied country, brought us once more to the well-known entrance of the Underdown domain.

The sun had set in glory, and the shades of twilight were fast closing in upon a lovely evening, as we reached the well-remembered avenue, whose majestic trees, the venerable growth of centuries, threw a still darker shadow upon all beneath them.

At the extremity nearest to the mansion, and at a right angle with one corner of the building, rose a splendid oak, "the monarch of the wood," standing, as it were, proudly aloof—it had been Sir Oliver's favourite tree.

A rustic bench encircled its time-worn trunk,

and here, a hundred and a hundred times, had I seen my poor Uncle in happier days, gazing with an honest pride upon the silvan scene before him,—the fair domain transmitted down to him from so many Bullwinkles,—now like himself at peace,—while he inhaled the sedative fragrance of a pipe of the best Virginia.

Alas ! poor Uncle Oliver !—never again should I behold that open friendly countenance, in which might be read, as in a book, every thought of his guileless heart !—never again should I encounter the kindly glance of that eye beaming on me with all but paternal love !—never again receive the fervent pressure of that hearty and affectionate grasp !—never again should I hear ——

Why, what on earth was that ?—How deceptive the unreal mockeries of fancy !

“ And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown,”

how often does she, in her vagaries,

“ Give to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name ! ”

I could have sworn, at the very moment that these, and thoughts like these, were rushing on my mind in an overwhelming flood of fond reminiscence — even then I could have sworn that I heard again that voice, now hushed for ever by the still, cold hand of death — that very cough, too, which exhibited the strength, rather than the weakness, of my poor Uncle's lungs, seemed to issue again; as heretofore, from beneath the tree of his love, — nay, I could almost have believed that a dim and shadowy form, resembling that of him that was gone, was yet hovering around its gnarled and knotty trunk.

The same, or some similar idea seemed to have stricken my Cousin Nicholas, for, rousing himself from the corner of the chaise in which he had been for some time silently reclining, he suddenly exclaimed, with a vivacity that startled me.

“Gracious heaven! what is this!”

Then breaking one of the front glasses in his eagerness to let it down, he called loudly to the drivers to stop.

My eye followed the direction of his own, and again, to my thinking, I saw my Uncle Oliver, "in his habit as he lived," rise deliberately from the accustomed seat, and advance towards the carriage.

Nicholas uttered a shriek, and sprang from the vehicle. Before I could follow he was on his knees upon the greensward, his hands uplifted, and his eyes starting from his head with horror.

"Father!—dear father!" he cried in agony, "come not from the grave to curse your son. Pardon!—oh pardon!"—

He fell upon his face as he spoke, and I was electrified as I distinctly heard the phantom reply to his adjuration,—"Go to the devil, you infernal Scoundrel!"

A mist seemed to gather on my senses, and I could scarcely summon up resolution enough to quit the chaise. When, however, I had accomplished my descent, there still lay Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle, literally writhing with agony on the turf.

"Mercy! mercy!" came from his lips, in

suffocating accents—"Pardon! Mercy!—Forgive, blest Shade!——"

"Blest fool's-head!" returned the Spectre, to my indescribable astonishment. "Get up this instant, you rascal, and don't lie sprawling there."

And it looked all the while so like the late Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, that, had I not known him to be defunct, I could have made oath it was his very self.

"Get up, I say, scoundrel!" continued the *Eidolon*; and, at the same moment, the sound of a kick, from what seemed to be its foot, as the shadowy member vehemently encountered the most undefended part of my Cousin Nicholas's person, excited in my mind a strong suspicion of its materiality.

Mine eye had by this time "well examined the parts" of the apparition, and

"Found them perfect Oliver."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "can it be! — Sir Oliver! — and you really are *not* dead?"

"Dead!—Dead be d—d!" quoth the Spirit,—

ejaculating as if on purpose to illustrate that obscure line of Gray's —

“Even in our ashes live their wonted fires !”

“No more dead than yourself, if you come to that ! — All a bam of that rascally newspaper — put in by some lying vagabond on purpose — this fellow as likely as anybody !”

And so it was ! — so it must be — a hundred circumstances flashed on my memory to prove it — his difficulties, his debts, his menaced incarceration ! — Mr. Bullwinkle, *ci-devant* of Brasenose, — the disgraced of Oxford, — the discarded of his father, — the rejected of Rabbi Aaron Ximenes, — could not, as a *deshichado*, have preserved his personal liberty one single week ; — it was reserved for the brilliant genius of my Cousin Nicholas thus to turn disaster into victory, and, by a splendid *coup de maître*, to convert foes into auxiliaries, drawing supplies from the very quarters whence he had the most to apprehend.

His Tailor, like many, — not to say most, — of the West-End *Schneiders*, dealt at least as much

in bills as breeches, and " Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle," the youthful and extravagant baronet of six thousand a-year, not only obtained an immediate cessation of the hostilities proclaimed against " N. Bullwinkle, *Esquire*," but found every " accommodation " he could require " on the most reasonable terms," while, as no " Grand-National-United-Tailors'-Strike " was in those unenlightened days so much as dreamt of in the most glowing visions of the Humes and Owens, complete mourning for the whole of his embryonic establishments in town and country was promised, without fear of failure, " at six hours' notice," and the professional credit of Mr. Kersyemere Kite pledged for its delivery within the time.

Messrs. Birdseye, Mapleton, and Company, who had not long since furnished a pleasant little retreat in the King's Road, Fulham, for a female relation of the Bullwinkles, — whose name, by the way, Sir Oliver had most unaccountably omitted to register in the family pedigree, but for whose ottomans, *chiffonnières*, and *chaises longues*, my Cousin Nicholas had

very generously made himself responsible, — were no less polite. An order for a splendid funeral, and for the hanging Underdown Church with the finest black broad cloth, accompanied with a hint that the heir was rather short of ready cash, till “the will should be proved, and arrangements made with the bankers,” were both immediately taken. The deceased Baronet, it was faithfully promised by the Birdseye polyonomy, should be interred in a manner worthy the dignified representative of the Conqueror’s Standard-bearer; while a cheque for five hundred pounds, offered, and, I need scarcely say, accepted, as a temporary loan, evinced at once the opulence and the liberality of the firm.

Though not fully aware of all these and similar particulars at the moment, Nicholas had, in the course of the communications which he had made to me, said enough to furnish me with a clue to his whole plot. Doubtless he had taken his measures too well to permit any proof to exist that he was, in fact, the fabricator of the paragraph of which he had

thus reaped the benefit, and of which, in common with the rest of us, he would, no doubt, profess to have been the dupe.

In the meanwhile, he had succeeded in freeing himself, for a time, at least, from importunity, not to say a jail;—he had raised the wind for his intended Continental excursion,—the only part of his story I now believed in,—and he had, moreover, succeeded, by means of this “jolly good hoax,” in “humbugging” me into a condonation which, disgusted as I was with him, it was quite impossible for me, as a gentleman, to retract.

Such consummate duplicity, however, precluded the possibility of my taking any farther notice of him. Seizing, therefore, Sir Oliver’s arm, we turned together towards the Hall, leaving the penitent to the full enjoyment of his raptures at finding his father still in the land of the living, and to rub off, at his leisure, the verdure which his black net “tights” had contracted from his long-continued genuflexions on the moist grass.

CHAPTER IX.

Nay then, let the Devil wear black !

HAMLET.

Go hop me over every kennel home,

For you shall hop without my custom, Sir.

PETRUCHIO.

UNEXPECTED VISITORS.—MORE FREE THAN WELCOME.—

“DON'T YOU WISH YOU MAY GET IT?”—AN ATTACK.—

AN AMBUSCADE.—A REPULSE.—A RETREAT.

SIR OLIVER and myself pursued our way towards the house ; and it would not have been very easy to determine which of the two felt the most astonished and gratified at so unexpectedly encountering the other,—one a dear friend whom he believed to be dead,—the other a no less dear relative whom he knew to be married.

As both these conditions are apt to imply a separation from former ties and habits to a rather considerable extent, a sudden reunion, like the present, had, for hearts such as ours, a more than ordinary charm. My mother's surprise at seeing me was extreme ; so was that of Miss Pyefinch, and far more vociferous. Had the resurrection from the " mools " been one on my part instead of my Uncle's, her wonderment could scarcely have been greater.

My last communication had been dated from Belvoir Abbey, the day before our quitting it for Ryde, and both the ladies believed Amelia and myself to be at this moment ruralizing among the romantic glades of Shanklin. The penetrating Kitty, however, hit the right nail upon the head in a twinkling. " He has seen Sir Oliver's decease in the papers, and is come home to comfort us ! "

" But do not believe it—it is all nothing but nonsense," continued the poetess ; " dear Sir Oliver is not dead, and never has been dead at all ! "

I assured her that I gave implicit credit to

her statement; and the honest joy which sparkled in her eye lost nothing of its intensity from the pleasing self-importance which we all derive from being the first to communicate positive and authentic intelligence.

When the *éclat* of my arrival had a little subsided, I was told a tale which, while it added fresh fuel to the scarcely-slumbering embers of my wrath, it was impossible to hear, as Miss Kitty and Jennings respectively delivered it, without feeling at least as much disposition to laughter as indignation.

The Liberal journal in which the obnoxious paragraph had appeared was of course one never seen at the Hall, where, as was the case with nine out of ten of the County families, all were of strong Conservative principles.

The first intimation which Sir Oliver had of his own decease was from a spruce-looking gentleman in a suit of sables, the sprightliness of whose manner, and the smug familiarity of whose address, comported but badly with the lugubrious character of his habiliments and the solemnity of his errand.

The Baronet, after discussing his usual ample breakfast, was taking his morning's stroll about the grounds, and had reached the end of the avenue, where he stood leaning over the gate, in a picktooth attitude, and looking as if he thought he was thinking, when a smart, flashy, "buggy," freighted with the dapper gentleman aforesaid, drew up before him.

"Hunderdown 'All, hold gentleman, eh!—They told us first gate with bulls' heads on the *postes*."

"They were quite right," replied my Uncle. "This is the road to the Hall; and what, pray, may be your pleasure there, Sir?"

"Pleasure!—oh, no pleasure in life, hold boy—quite the *con-tra-ry*—no pleasure! hall bizzness—come to measure Sir Holiver for his coffin."

"The d—l you are!" said the astounded Baronet; "and what rascal, pray, sent you here on such an errand?"

"Rascal!—Vot do you mean by that, you foul-mouthed old buffer!—I tell you, I belongs to Birdseye, Mapleton, and Co., the first hun-

dertakers in Lunnun, and I comes to manage the old jockey's funeral ;—so open the gate at vonce, and mind my mare,—she's an 'ell of a kicker."

"So am I," said Sir Oliver, whose bristles were by this time thoroughly up ; "and curse me if I don't kick you round the park if you dare put your foot into it.—You make Sir Oliver's coffin, you son of a cinder-sifter !—Sir Oliver would see you d—d first."

"Oh, vot you thinks to do it yourself, I s'pose,—von of the hold boy's country *rums*, vot does carpenter's vork, and mends his barnses !—It's no go, hold chap,—Sir Nicholas has given us the job, I tell ye, so you may as vell mizzle at vonce."

"Sir who ?" roared Sir Oliver.

"Vy, Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle, to be sure,—who else ! The young Barrownight as is.—So open the gate vide, vill ye ? and don't stand jawing there all day !"

It was lucky perhaps that a light, open van drew up to the gate at this precise moment ; the Baronet was thoroughly exasperated, and

an assault and battery upon the gentleman in the gig would, in all probability have wound up the colloquy. As the metropolitan Jehu, however, had begun to back his kicking mare a little at the first sight of his opponent's manifestations of determined hostility, the humbler vehicle "cut in" before him.

"Be this the road to Underdown Hall, Sir!" asked the lad who drove it, respectfully touching his hat.

"Yes, my man,—what have you got there?"

"Bullwinkle arms, Sir," answered the driver;—and there, sure enough, did the astonished eyes of Sir Oliver behold, in the back of the cart and bolt upright, a splendid escutcheon, within a black, lozenge-shaped frame, some six feet by five in measurement, charged with the "golden fetterlocks in the azure field," and the "bloody hand" in a canton; the whole surmounted by the equestrian helmet; bearing a bull's head *proper*, horned and coupé *Or*—his family coat in full and gorgeous blazonry—the only perceptible difference was, that in lieu of the motto, *Sans peur et sans reproche*, the single word *Resurgam* was

conspicuous on the scroll, beneath which grinned horribly a death's head, flanked with a bat's wings, and having a couple of thigh bones crossed in *saltier* under its chin.

At the very glimpse of an heraldic bearing, Sir Oliver had thrown open the gate, and the van had fairly entered the park before he caught sight of the ominous label, or fully comprehended the purpose to which the achievement was intended to be applied.

"Where are you carrying that thing! and what are you going to do with it!" he inquired, in an astonishment, which began to partake somewhat of alarm.

"Hang it over the hall door, Sir," said the lad civilly; "the men will be here directly."

"Why, who is dead, boy?"

"Sir Oliver Bullwinkle, Esquire.—Cheep—cheep!"—and the horse, in obedience to the well-known signal, trotted on with his light burden along the vista.

"Vot, didn't you know it, my covey?" quoth the foreman of Messrs. Birdseye, Mapleton, and Company, who had seized the opportunity to

drive through the yawning portal himself. "Vy, lawk love 'ee, he's as dead as 'Arry the *Heighth*, and 'as been these three days; vy, it's in hall the papers."

The Baronet fell back, absolutely confounded, and the " 'ell of a kicker " bore the " buggy " and its contents rapidly on towards the house.

My Uncle's annoyances unfortunately did not terminate here; it is true, that the united testimony of men and maids did at length, sorely to his amazement, convince the worthy agent of the Birdseye firm that he was in error, and " conglomerated " his faculties pretty considerably in his turn, while the achievement was sent back, not without blessings, to the place from which it came; but scarcely had Sir Oliver doffed his corduroys and " continuations," and was preparing to sit down to dinner in dove-coloured hose and clean linen, the latter adorned with a most magnificent redundancy of frill, when the sound of wheels was again heard approaching the mansion.

" Somebody come to dinner," quoth the Baronet; " well, so much the better—glad of it—

been plagued and bothered all day—shall like a chat,—Pyefinch, you're an infernal dummy,—may as well talk to the cat."

The Captain raised his eyes, but seemed to think no answer necessary.

A carriage now stopped at the door, and the parlour windows being partly open, a voice was heard inquiring if "the Baronet was at home?" The rattle of the steps, which followed, proved that the answer had been satisfactory, and that the unexpected guest had alighted.

"Two gentlemen to wait on you, Sir Oliver."

"Show 'em in here, Jennings,—glad to see them—lay more plates—who the d—l are they?"

"Mr. Jones and Mr. Simpson!" said the butler, announcing two respectable looking personages in travelling dresses, who followed him into the room.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen;—walk in—glad to see you—come to dine, I hope!—be on table in a minute."

"You are extremely kind, sir—very much

obliged — but really not at all prepared — did not expect the honour — a little business.”

“Pooh ! pooh ! no ceremony here — d—n dress and all that — business ! — very well — talk of business after dinner. — My sister, gentlemen, — Miss Pyefinch — Captain Pyefinch — sister, Mr. Sampson and Mr. Thingummees — Jennings, dinner !”

“Yes, Sir Oliver,” said the butler, as he retired and closed the door.

“Sir Oliver !” said Mr. Jones.

“Sir Oliver !!” said Mr. Simpson.

“Why, yes, Sir Oliver,” echoed my Uncle — “Oliver Bullwinkle — who the d—l do you take me to be !”

“Sir Oliver Bullwinkle is no more,” — said Mr. Jones.

“Sir Oliver Bullwinkle died last Friday,” — said Mr. Simpson.

“It is an infernal lie !” said Sir Oliver. “Here, Jennings ! — Pyefinch, ring the bell — do ring it as hard as you can. Why, Jennings, I say, keep back the dinner — throw those two plates out of the window. — What the d—l do

you two scoundrels mean by coming to insult me in my own house?"

"Your own house?" said Mr. Jones.

"Your own house?" screamed Mr. Simpson.

"My own house! ay, my own house — it is not yours, is it? — Who are ye? — What are ye come for? — the spoons! or the furniture?"

"Neither, Sir; it is the books we want!"

"Oh, my books, do ye! Confound your impudence! Where do ye come from, I say? — who sent ye? — What do ye take me for?"

"A madman," whispered the alarmed Mr. Jones.

"Must be crazy!" gasped the terrified Mr. Simpson.

"Crazy?" — cried Sir Oliver, "I crazy? — Hark ye, fellows, here stands old Oliver Bullwinkle, who, crazy or not, will never suffer himself to be called so on his own oak floor by a couple of impudent vagabonds. — Jennings! — Tom! — Wilkinson! here, throw these rascals into the horse-pond."

"For Heaven's sake, Sir Oliver," interposed my mother, "here must be some mistake!"

"For Heaven's sake, Sir Oliver!" chimed in Miss Kitty.

The Captain said nothing, but, like the philosopher's parrot, doubtless he "thought the more."

"Sir Oliver!" reiterated Mr. Jones, but in a much lower key than before, "I beg pardon — I beg a thousand pardons — I mean no offence — no offence in the world. — But is Sir Oliver Bullwinkle really alive?"

The Captain nodded oracularly, for to him the appeal seemed to have been more particularly directed; and his sister exclaimed, "Alive! — why, don't you see he is! — I wonder how any one can ask so foolish a question!"

But Mrs. Stafford, who had heard enough of the events of the morning, and began to divine how matters stood, now interfered effectually.

She first exerted all her energies, and not without success, to pacify her brother's kindled rage, and to reassure the alarmed and astonished booksellers, for such the visitors were, who were beginning to entertain no slight apprehensions for their personal safety.

Their story was soon told—Sir Nicholas Bullwinkle, as he had styled himself, being in want of a little ready money on succeeding to his title, had obtained one thousand pounds sterling from Messrs. Jones, Palimpsest, and Gingerby, of “the Row,”—“upon account.” Mr. Jones, who had seen the library at Underdown, and knew its value, was to go down, and select from its shelves such, and so many, volumes as he might approve to the above amount, while Mr. Simpson, of the Firm of Sheepskin, Simpson, and Wiggleby, was to accompany him in the capacity of appraiser for, and on the part of, the vender.

“What inconvenience and trouble has one ‘mistake’ in a newspaper occasioned!—What a shame the editor was not more particular!”

So said Miss Pyefinch; so said Mr. Simpson—Mr. Jones said nothing, but he looked unutterable things. At length he found words enough to touch upon the one subject which was evidently nearest his heart—his thousand pounds.

“I hope, Sir Oliver, you will see the neces-

sity of letting me have the books, or of returning, or at least guaranteeing the repayment of the money !”

“ Who, I ? — what have I to do with it ! — I pay Nick’s debts ! — I answer for his swindling tricks ! Not a stiver — never ! — let him pay it himself — if he can’t, so much the better ! — Catch him — transport him — hang him if you can — all the better ! — shall be quite delighted ——”

The head of the firm looked blank ; but a significant glance from my mother somewhat reassured him ; he had already witnessed the extent of her influence over her brother ; he was a man of the world, and knew that this was not the moment to press his suit ; so like many a profound statesman before him, he yielded to expediency, and sat down with his friend, Mr. Simpson, to partake of the Baronet’s hospitality, which, now that harmony was restored, was again freely tendered them.

As the bottle circulated after dinner, Sir Oliver got into a better humour, but his guests

failed, after all, in extracting from him anything like a "promise to pay;" and, declining the offered accommodation of a bed at the Hall, the discomfited speculators in literature at length returned to sleep at the nearest post-town, Mr. Jones consoling himself with the reflection, that he had, at all events, two strings to his bow, and that if Sir Oliver should continue obstinate, and he could once get Nicholas "within his vice," he should, in all human probability, extract from the father's fears what, it seemed, he was not to expect from his generosity.

Several minor miseries of a similar description had been inflicted on the family during the interval between the departure of Messrs. Jones and Simpson and my own arrival; — the sexton had called to "know about tolling the bell," — and the parish-clerk, who, to his ecclesiastical functions, superadded the lay occupation of an operative bricklayer, had walked up "for orders" to enforce the rotten jaws of the tomb of all the Bullwinkles to open; — these intrusions, however, had been for the most part confined to the servants' hall, and had never reach-

ed the Baronet. Still there was another and a more formidable antagonist in ambush, who yet meditated a vigorous attack upon him.

This was no less a personage than my Cousin Nicholas himself, who, repulsed as he had been in open assault from before the fortress, had since not only effected a lodgment within its outworks, under the auspices, and with the co-operation of a part of its garrison (Jennings), but was actually preparing to carry the citadel itself by a *coup de main*.

Alas ! like many an enterprising soldier before him, the General, renowned as he was in domestic strategics, for once overrated his powers, miscalculated his time, and ruined his best chance by his own precipitancy.

Sir Oliver had been stoutly assailed in the morning by my mother, who made her approaches precisely on the side where his defences were weakest,—the honour of the family.—The other debts of Nicholas he might deal with as he pleased, and leave him to suffer for his imprudence in contracting them ;—but this affair of the books looked so very like swindling, and

obtaining money under false pretences, that it was questionable whether any twelve men in "the County of Middlesex to wit," could be found clear-sighted enough to distinguish the difference; — she owned that she trembled for the result. Mr. Jones, at parting, had "right little said," but there was a something ominous in his very silence, and his eye had carried Newgate in its every glance. Jennings, too, had given her a hint that one or two odd-looking people had since been seen about the grounds.

Gracious powers! a Bullwinkle at the Old Bailey! — Shade of the immortal Roger! — that way madness lay! Open earth first, and swallow Underdown and all it contained!

Though not so wedded to "the pedigree" as her brother, Mrs. Stafford was yet sufficiently imbued with the honest pride, that exults in descending from a lineage of which "all the sons were honourable, and all the daughters virtuous;" — she would have done much, and borne much to prevent a stain upon the family, which no subsequent effort could obliterate. She thought, too, that, deserving as my Cousin was

of punishment, it should yet stop short of that excess of severity which might drive him to despair.

She implored her brother to pause, to consider the consequences which must follow the apprehension of the heir of the house on such a charge; the disgrace which, however unmerited, would infallibly attach to all connected with him.—She pressed him for her own sake,—for all our sakes, to replace the sum, and declared that, should the raising it on the instant be in the slightest degree inconvenient to him, she would joyfully advance the money herself.

“No, no, that’s not it,” returned the Baronet, a little staggered by the force of her representations,—“that’s not it,—curse the money—there is enough of it in that *bureau* at this moment to pay the trumpery sum twice over,—it is not that,—but to be choused, and bamboozled and humbugged—sell the books! Never—I’ll never forgive him—no, if he were kneeling now at my feet ——”

And there he was—there,—the most contrite, the most supplicatory of mankind in look and

action,—knelt my Cousin Nicholas !—his arms crossed upon his breast, and his eyes turned up with the expression of a male Magdalen—barring the squint.

Under the cover of a tall Indian screen, covered with little gold men in little gold funnel-shaped hats, with long gold pigtails, and longer gold fishing-rods, standing on short gold bridges, overtopped by tall gold pagodas, upon a ground whose polished japan would have put Day and Martin to open shame,—by favour of such a screen placed just within the door of his “ Snuggery,” for the purpose of preventing the draughts of Heaven from visiting the Baronet’s limbs too roughly, had Mr. Bullwinkle followed my mother unperceived, into the little room where his father usually transacted his “ Justice business,” and kept his papers ;—from the depth of this ambuscade in silence had he witnessed the progress of her intercession.

The moment he thought was at length arrived when a demonstration on his own part might effectually sustain the attack of his auxiliary.

My Cousin Nicholas was never more mistaken in his life !

The very sight of him seemed at once to bring back the ebbing ire of Sir Oliver in tremendous refluxence ; all his newly-acquired mildness was dissipated in an instant, and, to use the language of the present day, " the reaction " was complete.

Nicholas was compelled to scud before the storm under bare poles ;—he effected his retreat indeed, but not before his father had, in the exuberance of his wrath, launched at him an *anathema* which he vowed he would never revoke but on the death-bed of one of them.

O cæca mens hominum !—little did he then think how soon—how very soon—he would have given worlds to recal it !—but let me not anticipate.

CHAPTER XI.

Last scene of all,
Which ends this strange eventful history.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LATITAT.—CONVERSATION AND EXPLANATION.—THE MID-NIGHT HOUR. — THE MORE HASTE THE LESS SPEED. — THE ECLAIRCISSEMENT. — THE DENOUEMENT. — THE FALL OF THE LEAF.—THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

ONCE more ensconced among the “Curiosities of his Museum” in the back attic, my Cousin Nicholas again lay *perdu*, disheartened, but not subdued, when a sight which he beheld from its solitary window rendered him for the moment very little inclined to quit the safe retreat afforded him by his asylum; this was the view of a travelling-cartiage and four, followed by out-

riders in the Manningham liveries, and advancing rapidly along the road to the Hall.

My Cousin was just now in no humour to see company, especially when awkward recognitions might by possibility take place—he resolved to keep close in his garret, and not “be at home to anybody.”

Nor were his conjectures without foundation ; the vehicle which he beheld contained the Viscount and Fortescue, who, like myself, were brought to Underdown by the fabricated paragraph.

Astonished at having received no intelligence of so melancholy an event from his sister-in-law, and apprehensive as to the cause of her silence, Lord Manningham had come in person to condole with, and offer her his best attentions ; but the “jolly good hoax” had by this time got wind through the medium of the Jones and Birdseye gentry, and his Lordship had been undeceived as to the Baronet’s supposed decease, while changing horses at the last stage.

His arrival, however, was by no means *mal-à-propos* ; on the contrary, it appeared to act like

oil upon the billows of my uncle's wrath, and soothed him once more into something resembling a calm, though the ground-swell still continued to manifest itself for some time after. But Sir Oliver had a great respect for his noble connexion, and, if Fortescue had never ranked very high in his good graces, from the time of his "winging" my unfortunate self, still his quiet and reserved habits had prevented their coming much into contact, or ever into collision; their presence had, in consequence, a very sedative effect.

It will not be necessary to take my readers again over the same ground which we have so recently travelled together, or to speak of the astonishment of the new comers at the impudence of the forgery, their conjectures as to its author and his motives, or their congratulations on its ascertained falsehood; though all these topics were, naturally enough, brought under revision by the party, both before and after dinner. I hasten on to the narration of an event which changed, in one moment, the whole current

of our thoughts, and produced a sensation, compared with which all our previous agitation and excitement might be called tranquillity.

The evening had closed in ; my mother and Miss Pyefinch had long since sought their pillows, and I myself was preparing to retire for the night. On ascending the great staircase I encountered Fortescue, who had preceded me by a few minutes. He was evidently in waiting for me, and now made a quiet signal, in obedience to which I followed him in silence to the apartment prepared for his reception ; it was a room on the first floor, and immediately over that which my uncle used to call his " Snuggery," the same in which the last interview between him and my Cousin Nicholas has been recorded to have taken place.

We had left Sir Oliver and Lord Manningham deeply engaged in conversation in the Cedar parlour, which was on the other side of the house, and the door leading to which opened from the farther extremity of the Hall.

The Baronet, when I quitted the room, was a little elevated ; — either, in what he would con-

sider the due discharge of his duties as a host, he had somewhat exceeded his customary potations, or the excitement which he had previously undergone in the course of the morning had given additional effect to his usual *quantum*.—I know not how it happened, but it was very evident that his vivacity was increasing in exact proportion to the drowsiness of which his visitor began to exhibit no equivocal symptoms — symptoms which Sir Oliver, who had now got fairly astride upon his favourite hobby-horse, “the Family of the Bullwinkles,” could not, and would not, understand.

The Baronet was riding *au grand galop* — he had reached as far as Sir Geoffrey Bullwinkle, who was killed fighting *ex parte regis* at the fatal battle of Marston Moor, before his noble auditor was fairly asleep; and as his native politeness had induced the latter to listen, — or seem to listen, — as long as nature could be persuaded to countenance the venial hypocrisy, the *raconteur* did not perceive the real condition of his patient till just upon the stroke of midnight.

Fortescue and myself meanwhile were engaged

in a discussion, the *sombre* character of which suited well with "the dead hour of night" at which it was carried on.

He was looking much paler and thinner than when I had last seen him ; his melancholy seemed more intense, and from the involuntary twitchings of the muscles about his mouth, his whole nervous system appeared to be more thoroughly shaken.

I adverted, in a tone of sympathy, to the fact, — he at once admitted it, and then, for the first time, I heard from his own lips an avowal of that mysterious communion which, as he was fully persuaded, continued still to exist between his own spirit and that of his departed mistress, — an intercourse which he pronounced to be at once the charm and the bane of his existence.

That he had been long since warned of some indefinite danger threatening Amelia, — that he had been incited at first to protect, and afterwards to avenge her ; — that, under this overpowering influence, he had found all the ties of gratitude and humanity too weak to restrain him from his destined task—all this he now solemnly

declared to me, and that, too, with a degree of earnestness which left no doubt of his own absolute conviction of the reality of his visitation.

In vain did I endeavour to prove to him his delusion ; in vain did I appeal to his reason, and even urge the fact of his having been so entirely mistaken in the object of his vengeance, as an irresistible argument of the fallacy of his impression — it staggered him, it is true, but it did not convince him.

“ No, Charles,” he replied, “ your conclusion is a hasty one. Since the unconscious error, which was fraught with so much mischief to yourself, I have been more ill at ease than ever ;—an inward feeling seems constantly to harass and upbraid me, not more for what I have done than for what I have left unperformed ;—there seems to be a deed reserved for me, — a something yet to be executed, — what I know not, — ere the importunate demands of destiny will be satisfied, and I may rest in peace.

“ This it is which blanches my cheek and unnerves my frame. I am ever in a state of vague and unnatural excitement ; anxious I know not

why,—apprehensive of I know not what ; this it is —— ”

He paused — for a slight sound like that of a stealthy footstep seemed at this moment to proceed from the corridor.

Not desiring an eavesdropper, I rose, and opened the door, but there was no one to be seen,—all was still ; and I was about to close it again, when the great clock in the hall struck One !

Immediately after, the measured tread of Lord Manningham was heard ascending, as his servant showed him to his chamber. I listened in vain for that of my Uncle ; he did not follow, but, as I concluded, remained still below. The noise of a closing door or two was heard, and all was again silent.

We renewed our conversation, and I my arguments and persuasions.

Half an hour had perhaps elapsed, and our candles were beginning to exhibit a most disproportionate length of wick, when the ears of both of us were at once invaded by a sound proceeding from the room immediately beneath.

It was a protracted, harsh, and grating noise, as if produced by a saw or file. It ceased for a few moments, and then again commenced.

Scarcely had we time to interchange a word on the subject when its character was altered. There was a pause—a scuffle—a chair fell—then we heard the half-smothered accents of a stifled voice—it sounded like the cry of “murder !”

I rushed to the door ; Fortescue, who had just before thrown off his coat, seized the travelling pistols which he had left undischarged upon the toilet, and followed in his shirt sleeves.

As I reached the head of the staircase, I made “a cannon” between Miss Pyeffinch, issuing from her bed-room in her night gear, and the banisters,—we rolled down to the first landing-place most lovingly together—Fortescue sprang over our revolving bodies, and reached the hall below ;—in an instant after, the crash of a door burst open,—the sound of a pistol shot,—a heavy fall—spoke of mischief—of injury—of death !

I recovered my feet in haste, and, without one word of apology to my terrified companion, rushed downwards to the hall.

Years have since rolled by, but never have I forgotten — never can I forget the scene which met my eyes.

The broad light of an autumnal moon shone full into the little chamber which I have been describing, unchecked even by the window, which was open :

In the door-way, and just within the entrance, two figures were distinctly visible, the one leaning on the other for support ; they were my Uncle Oliver and Fortescue ; — more in the interior, and towards the centre of the apartment, lay prostrate a form, which from the uncertainty of the light, there intercepted by a projecting cornice, might, or might not, be that of a human being.

My candle had been extinguished in my fall, Fortescue's had been left above, I stumbled over a third which had been stricken from the hand that bore it ; but the household was by this time alarmed, — servants were flocking in from every quarter, and Lord Manningham himself, in his *robe de chambre* appeared upon the scene of action.

My uncle Oliver was still clinging, with a

grasp convulsively tenacious, to the stalwart frame of Fortescue, who supported him as the oak supports the ivy.—On the ground, with the head towards their feet and the face to the floor, lay, indeed, the body of a man, still and motionless, while a thick, but narrow line of the deepest crimson, issuing from beneath the forehead, stagnated at the distance of a yard, in a broad and curling pool, on the surface of the stone-coloured carpet!

The lights and the company multiplied; Sir Oliver was the first object of attention to all; he was uninjured, save by a slight wound on the back of one of his hands, but breathless, and with his dress disordered and torn, as from a violent struggle.

The prostrate form was next examined; it was raised from the ground, and, as the light flashed upon the inanimate and blood-stained features, Lord Manningham exclaimed — “By Heaven! the pretended Stafford!”—and I, “My Cousin Nicholas!—”

“Then it is done! and my weird is accomplished!” cried Fortescue, as, extricating himself

from my Uncle's grasp, he staggered back into the hall, and sank in all the feebleness of infancy upon a chair ;—a discharged pistol fell from his hand as he spoke.

* * * *

Let me draw a veil over this horrible event, the earlier particulars of which could never be clearly ascertained, for poor Uncle Oliver, who alone could have elucidated the whole, never recovered the shock, but sank, from that fatal moment, into childish imbecility.

From Fortescue, indeed, we gathered, in after days, that, guided by the sounds from within, he had forced open the door with his foot, that he had seen Sir Oliver, exhausted, upon his knees, and a ruffian with one hand twisted in my Uncle's cravat, while the other grasped a weapon that glittered in the moonbeam, and seemed in the very act of descending on his unprotected head ;—a moment longer, and it would have been too late,—he fired, and the rescued victim staggered into his embrace, as the assassin fell without a groan—the ball had penetrated his brain.

A sharp and heavy chisel, found on the spot from which the corpse had been raised, corroborated this account, while marks of violence, corresponding with the instrument, which appeared upon the forced lock of the *bureau*, bespoke the main — let us hope the only — purpose for which it had been introduced.

Whether Sir Oliver, whose vigils, as we have seen, had been prolonged beyond his wont, had been alarmed by the noise produced in attempting his *escrutoire*, or whether he had taken it into his head to pay a casual visit to his “Snuggery,” before retiring to bed, and there encountered the intruder, cannot be known; that he had detected him in the act of breaking into his depository, was clear; it was also evident that a personal conflict—let us hope in mutual ignorance of their relative situations,—had taken place between the parties.

That Nicholas had overheard his father’s avowal, made to my mother, concerning the sums in the *escrutoire*, was almost certain; that the apparent hopelessness of any farther appeal to his exasperated father, at present, the pursuit of the

officers; and, above all, the arrival of Lord Manningham, who would be sure to recognise him, if seen, — that all these circumstances combined to make him desperate, was most probable.

In all likelihood, finding it impossible to remain long undetected in his present retreat, he had determined on possessing himself of the property which he had heard was in the bureau, and on putting into execution his previously avowed design of retiring for a while to the Continent, where the sums he had collected, and that which he thus expected to secure, would support him till circumstances might render his return to England safe and advisable. — The fatal result of his unprincipled attempt we have already seen.

* * * *

But little of this eventful history remains to be told; for the satisfaction, however, of those who have travelled thus far with me through the chameleon life of my unfortunate Cousin, and who may condescend to take an interest in the fortunes of those associated with him, I may be permitted to state that my poor Uncle Sir Oliver

did not survive the loss of his son many months, and never awoke to a full consciousness of his misfortune. He wasted gradually away, and, without any decided disease to which Death could give a name, became as a blighted and a withered tree.—He ate the food set before him; but, as Miss Pyeanch often observed, “it seemed to do him no sort of good.”—He seldom spoke, and still more rarely quitted his chamber; there were times, however, when, from his inquiring glances, we fancied that he partially recognised those about him, but he never confirmed that opinion by words.

It was in the twilight of an autumnal evening, in the course of the following year, that the game-keeper's son, a boy of fourteen, had, in the temporary absence of the family, taken his father's gun, attracted by a flight of pigeon-fieldfares which had alighted among the berries of the shrubbery;—a projecting buttress of the building offered him concealment, and from beneath its covert he made his shot. Sir Oliver, now quite enfeebled and unconscious, as usual, of all about him, was in a room above.

At the report of the piece he sprang from his seat with a vigour, which to his attendants seemed little less than miraculous, and, with a shriek that long after rang in their ears, exclaimed,—“ Hold! — Hold your hand, I say! — don’t fire! — ’tis my boy — ’tis Nicholas!”

A servant caught him as he was falling, and conveyed him to a couch, but his weary course was ended; his heart-strings had given way — Sir Oliver Bullwinkle was dead!

Fortescue quitted England, as he declared, for ever, soon after the fatal catastrophe in which he had taken so unfortunate a share. The accident of the real insulter of Amelia having fallen by his hand, only the more strongly confirmed him in his melancholy delusion.

Without assuming the shape of decided insanity, his eccentricities became more and more apparent. We have often heard from him during his wanderings, which have extended over no inconsiderable portion of the habitable globe. Our last accounts were from India, and spoke of ill health, and increasing debility. “ He had returned,” he said, “ to Hindostan, in obedience

to a summons from Matilda, to lay his bones beside those of his early love."

Captain Pyefinch is no more; — he did not long survive the last of the Bullwinkles; — for the first time in his life, perhaps, a tear was seen to trickle down his cheek as he beheld his old friend and companion consigned to the "narrow house;" and from that moment, though little alteration was to be perceived in his ever placid demeanour, yet he too seemed to grow thinner and thinner; his nose became as sharp as a pen, and he looked as if he had no longer anybody to hold his tongue to.

His passing out of the world was, like the whole tenor of his existence in it, quiet and tranquil. One morning he did not come down to breakfast; more marvellous still, he was absent from the dinner-table. Drench repaired to his bedside, felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, and asked him "How he found himself?" The patient laid his hand upon his heart, looked wistfully in the doctor's face, and said—"Queer!"—"What was the matter with him? What were his symptoms?"—"Un-com—fort—a—ble,"

whispered the poor Captain — and expired ! — Drench is decidedly of opinion that he died of suffocation produced by the length of the polysyllable.

But Miss Kitty is yet alive, and likely to live — still devoted to the worship of the Muses, and, youthful as ever — save that she has grown a little deaf.

Without abandoning the service of Polyhymnia, she has been coquetting much of late with her severer sister, who presides over Political Economy. She has become in consequence more thoroughly engrained than even of yore with the prevailing tint that marks, what the most eloquent and impassioned Auctioneer of this world, — or of any other, — once denominated “the Azure, Blue, Cærulean vault of Heaven.”

For much of her deepened dye, she is indebted to the celebrated Dr. Olinthus Broadbeck, of the “Grand National Institute of Intellectual Chimney-sweepers.”

This erudite professor, in one of his itinerant excursions, undertaken for the purpose of enlightening every provincial *Ignoramus*, happened to

include Underdown in his circle, and to deliver, in the great room at the Saracen's Head, a series of lectures at the trifling charge of two-pence each person.

In the course of these interesting disquisitions, the philosopher demonstrated incontestably that the sun is *not* a soot-bag, nor the moon made of cream-cheese; — that any opposite opinions which may have prevailed are “vulgar errors,” originally introduced by the late Lord Londonderry, and since countenanced by Sir Robert Peel and “the Tories,” for the mere purpose of “trampling” on the “useful classes.”

Miss Pyefinch was first the attentive and delighted auditor, and then the friend and correspondent of this gifted individual. Together did they walk hand-in-hand through the labyrinths of statistical lore. To her did he communicate his wonderful discoveries in all the vast variety of “inities” and “ologies” — to him did she submit her Album. Nay, it has been positively asserted that the last entry in that splendid collection of fugitive poetry is from the Doctor's own inspired pen. If Fame speaks

truth in this respect, the effusion is the more valuable, as being the only accredited specimen of his Muse; for, with all his unrivalled talents, the "Gods have not made him poetical." It is some vague perception of this kind, perhaps, which may have given birth to his concluding stanza, which runs thus :—

"Hinch'em, pinch'em, barley-straw !
Nineteen pinches is the law !—
Pinch not now,—but pinch me then—
Pinch me when I rhyme again !"

A rumour has gone forth that this platonic affection is likely to end like many other platonic affections, in warmer sympathies, and to "eventuate," as the Doctor calls it, in a matrimonial connexion.

The only objection to this story is, that in principle the lady is avowedly become a decided Malthusian, speaks with horror of "thoughtless procreation," and looks forward with alarm to no very distant period when the world shall be destroyed by its human vermin, as a ripe Stilton cheese is devoured by its own mites.

She has discarded her flaxen ringlets, laughs at fashion, and is learning to smoke cigars.

In her last "Essay on Propagation," she laid it down as an axiom, that those parts of the globe where polygamy prevails are the most thinly inhabited, and thence infers that the only way to prevent excess of population is for every man to have half a dozen wives at once.—She is said to be much in the confidence of a certain Minister of State, and is grievously suspected by the Bishop of Exeter to have had a hand in framing sundry questionable clauses in the new "Poor Law Bill," which are thought to press hard on the comforts of those who "love not wisely, but too well."—I was told at the Club last Wednesday, that she is now projecting a voyage to the West Indies for the purpose of watching the progress of procreation among the emancipated Negroes.

The Reverend Josiah Pozzlethwayte has lately attained his grand climacteric. His academical labours came to an abrupt termination some few years since by the falling in of a valuable college living in a midland county, and he is now the re-

spected incumbent of Slopton Boozle, with the vicarage of Spakingham annexed. He is happy in the possession of a comfortable income, a snug parsonage, and a Housekeeper who delighteth in cherry-coloured ribbons.

Though no longer resident, Mr. Pozzlethwayte is a frequent visitor at Oxford, and at the last Installation was honoured by the especial notice of his Grace the Duke of Wellington himself, that illustrious Chancellor condescending to inquire, with much seeming earnestness and characteristic rapidity, "Inglis, who is that d—d odd-looking fellow in the wig?"

So glorious a close to his long and laborious career is justly considered a subject of great congratulation by his friends.

Drench, though somewhat fallen into the "sear and yellow leaf," is still, to use his own language, "as hearty as a buck," thanks to an excellent constitution, and never taking his own medicines. The end of his pigtail to be sure is become white, and contrasts well with the sable shalloon that unites it to his occiput; but then, *per contra*, his nose is redder than ever, and no man in all

Underdown has a keener relish for his glass of old port and his rubber of long whist.

He has long since retired from the active duties of his profession, and having consigned his *hiera picra* to a younger hand, enjoys his *otium cum dignitate* on an adequate independence honourably acquired.

Some months before his final resolution to "throw physic to the dogs," a sharp attack of bile confined him to his room, and thirteen disbanded army surgeons came down on the outside of the "Tally-ho," and settled themselves at Underdown in anticipation of a vacancy; but the Doctor's *stamina* carried him through, and soon after his recovery he seized an opportunity of disposing of his practice to an eminent Irish professor of the healing art, inventor and sole proprietor of the "Reanimating Mineral Pill."

The fame of this celebrated *panacea* is now great in Underdown and its vicinity, for though two or three perverse verdicts under "crowner's quest law" have recently cast a shade of suspicion on its virtues with the incredulous, yet, as its learned proprietor very classically observes, —

"Magnum sunt veritatem et prævalebit."

Among the better disposed and more enlightened, a single bushel of these invaluable balmes is still considered as generally sufficient for the cure of all human complaints.

My noble and gallant father-in-law is receiving, in a higher and happier state of existence, the reward of a life passed here in the faithful and active discharge of every duty which they who are placed by Providence in exalted stations owe to their country and to mankind. A splendid funeral, attended by the Magnates of the land, and a monument in Westminster Abbey, erected at the public expense, were the tribute paid by his country's gratitude to his public merits. Sorrow unfeigned, and affectionate regret, were the homage, as genuine, if less ostentatious, rendered, by a large social circle, to his private virtues.

At his decease, the family honours, of course, devolved upon myself. Lady Manningham, in whom my fondest hopes have found their accomplishment, has presented me with five good-looking children, who, if not absolutely "little an-

gels," as my friend Kitty would once have called them, are well-formed, healthy, and robust.

When not detained in London by my parliamentary duties, we usually pass our time alternately at the Abbey and the Hall, which latter, together with the surrounding domain, became my property by succession, and has since been settled as the appanage of my second son, Oliver Stafford.

There are times when we have the authority of one who was himself a statesman, for believing, that "the post of honour is a private station," and though I never have shrunk, nor ever shall shrink, from doing what I consider my duty towards the country which has given me birth, I have little encouragement, and less inclination, at present to embark upon the stormy sea of politics. As a husband, a father, and a resident landlord, I have full and pleasing occupation for my time. My children are educated under my own eye, and that of their excellent mother, by a pious and learned divine of our venerable church, who officiates also as my chaplain. They are brought up in the fear of God, and the love of their

fellow-creatures ; and when we see, as we sometimes do see, in the exuberant liveliness of their animal spirits, any tendency to extravagant and practical jokes, or to self-indulgence at the expense of others, we fail not to inculcate upon them the too lightly regarded axiom, that IMPUDENCE IS NOT HUMOUR, NOR MISCHIEF WIT ; — THAT LEVITY, IF UNCHECKED BY PRINCIPLE, MAY DEGENERATE INTO VICE, AND TERMINATE IN CRIME.

It is our constant aim not to throw unnecessarily a damp upon the light and buoyant spirit of youthful hilarity, but to confine that spirit within the limits set by Reason and Religion ; — to check all outrageous and injurious follies, and to

“ Warn the frolic and instruct the gay,”

by setting before them in distinct, if sombre colours, the melancholy

END OF MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

BY DALTON INGOLDSBY.

GAME THE FIRST.



GAME THE FIRST.

THE BRIDE.

CHAPTER I.

————— Beware of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster that doth make
The meat it feeds on. *Othello.*

A FAMILY PARTY. — WHAT CAN HAVE BECOME OF HIM? —
A MYSTERIOUS HERO AND A DISSATISFIED HEROINE.

WITHIN the drawing-room of a spacious mansion, situated in Russell Square, sat a family party consisting of three personages.

The eldest, John Boughton, Esquire, of Lindsey Court, in *comitatu* Kent, was a spare but hale old gentleman, who might have numbered some sixty-five “or by ’r Lady some seventy”

summers. His habits and his costume seemed those of a by-gone day; he had never been known to appear in any other than a white neck-cloth, and still retained an undisguised partiality for the top-boots and leathers of the last century.

Mr. Boughton was at this moment dozing in a high-backed arm-chair; his feet were supported by a stool, and his elbows resting respectively on those of his seat, brought the backs of his hands nearly in collision; his head upturned, was reclining on his left shoulder; so that his port, on the whole, afforded no very faint resemblance to that of a bandy-legged poodle begging for toast.

By his side, and presiding at the tea-table, sat a lovely girl, whose large dark eye wandered alternately towards her slumbering parent and a French clock on the mantel-piece, all regardless of an under-sized, over-aged lady, who was placed immediately opposite to her.

"I really think I must rouse papa," observed Miss Boughton, interrupting a somewhat hyperbolic eulogy upon the elegance of Smugs' Chinese Emporium, which had been flowing during the last ten minutes from the lips of her confidential

friend—confiding had been, perhaps, a better
• epithet.

Miss Magge—that was the elderly lady's name—was one of those individuals who may be termed gossip-ducts, the mere canals through which pleasant little anecdotes are disseminated. Everybody was her “dearest friend,” and she would willingly have offered herself as a feminine Nisus to any young lady within ten miles of her who was in want of a confidante,—her *Me! me! adsum!*—would have been ready at the shortest notice.

“I must really pour out the tea,” continued Clara. “Mr. Thugg and the Colonel will be here in ten minutes, and in anything but an amiable mood if their rubber is delayed. What can have become of Major Faulkland?”

“Is no one else expected, then?” inquired Miss Magge, with an expression of slyness natural to her little fox-like countenance.

“Why, Frank said he might possibly drop in during the evening; but then, you know, he is generally so much engaged.”

“Oh! he said he might possibly drop in,

did he?" returned the elder lady. "And he is generally so much engaged, is he? Now, my dear Clara, why won't you trust me with your little secrets?—Why not unbosom yourself at once, love?—My advice and my experience might be useful."

Clara coughed very gently.

"And, after all, it's nonsense trying to dissemble. I understand—you can't deceive me."

Having laid a considerable stress upon the last monosyllable, Miss Magge shot at the young lady a glance of unqualified shrewdness. A good-humoured smile, however, unaccompanied even by a blush, was all the reply which her attack produced.

"Well, then," pursued the spinster, a little nettled at the slight success her assault had experienced, "all I can say is, that if you are waiting for Mr. Frank Sherborne, you'll have to wait some time. I have nothing more to observe."

"And why?" carelessly inquired Clara.

"Oh! he is busy,—particularly busy, I dare

say, — and likely to continue so; — nothing more," said Miss Magge.

"Indeed!" said Clara, with a degree of interest which it was not always in the power of her visiter to excite. "How engaged?—how did you learn it?—and why did you not tell me so before?"

"Why, my dear," returned Miss Magge, "how can Mr. Sherborne's engagements concern me? And, of course, I couldn't dream for a moment that they would interest any other person present."

In order that the irony of this remark might by no possibility be overlooked, it was duly accompanied with a significant toss of the head, and as significant a curl of the nose and upper lip.

"All I know is," continued the little spinster, quite delighted to have struck at last upon a responsive chord, "that on my way hither I observed Mr. Frank walking with a lady, — that is, with an individual, — in a plaid cloak, and black velvet bonnet, trimmed much like that one of mine which you admired so much last winter—you must remember it, — with the

fall of black lace. But well—where was I? Oh—I couldn't see her countenance. She held her head down; so did he—well he might—and as they appeared to be engaged in *very* earnest conversation, I did not think it right to interrupt them.—It was one of Mr. Sherborne's clients, I dare say."

"A lady!" repeated Clara, changing colour, and busying herself with the china in order to avoid the observation of her companion; a ruse which probably had been of little avail but that a servant at that instant announced "Major Faulkland."

"A thousand apologies for my want of punctuality," exclaimed the gentleman, advancing. "Miss Magge will pardon me, I am sure, on learning that I have been urging her suit with Lady Amelia, and, I am happy to say, with complete success. Her ladyship has empowered me to place her name at your service, as patroness of the Grand Fancy Bazaar. Lord Adolphus has also promised to be present, if possible.—But where is the enemy?—And Frank, too; he is not wont to be a loiterer."

Clara coloured, and said nothing, but turned aside to arouse the old gentleman. Miss Magge shrugged her shoulders, raised her tea-cup to her lips, and then, putting it down in the gentlest manner possible, gazed in placid abstraction upon the ceiling.

The Major, seeing in an instant the sensation which he had produced, now directed his attention to Mr. Broughton, who having jerked his nose several times in and out of a capacious shirt-frill, was by this time rubbing it (the nose), opening and shutting his eyes, and expressing an opinion of his having been "positively asleep."

"Ah! Major," said he, after the process of awakening was a little further advanced, "how do? Bless me!—almost nine. Why, Clara, I have been dozing this hour and a half. Why didn't you make me a little coffee?—But what has become of Frank?"

Poor Clara looked more confused than before, and murmured something that was not very audible, or very much to the purpose, had it been so.—Miss Magge looked triumphant.—Mr. Broughton

regarded neither, but employed himself sedulously in devouring his coffee and muffins, with the air of a man that has to make up for lost time. As for the Major, he appeared to be busily engaged in turning over the leaves of a gaily-bound album on the table. The military guest was a man apparently about twenty-seven years of age, of a fine figure, fashionable appearance, good features, whiskers of an ebon blackness, and most unexceptionable moustaches to match. The colour of his eyes was not so readily determined; they seldom met the gaze—a species of diffidence which, together with a peculiar compression of the lips, gave to his otherwise handsome countenance rather an unprepossessing expression. But the quiet elegance of his manners, and the low soft tones of his voice, quickly obliterated any unfavourable prejudice that a mere stranger might, perhaps, at first sight form of him.

The history of his host was rather a singular one. Mr. Broughton was descended from an old county family, and had passed the first forty or fifty years of his life as what is commonly termed

a gentleman-farmer, when the rapid failure of many intervening branches threw into his possession most unexpectedly the strictly entailed estates. On the acquisition of this splendid and unlooked-for fortune, he divided his time chiefly between Lindsey Court, the family seat, and a town-house in Russell Square.

Here located, he took care to provide for his only surviving child masters of every description, so that, long ere our tale commences, Clara, the young lady in question, had become a proficient in all those accomplishments most in vogue among educated females of the present day, and which are, for the most part, so well adapted to make them agreeable companions, valuable wives, and intellectual mothers; that is to say, she could read and sing both French and Italian quite as fast and as intelligibly as the professors themselves;—she could dance with the grace of a Taglioni;—surmounted the least accessible passages on the piano and guitar;—painted the prettiest and tamest little landscapes in wine-and-water colours,—and was further suspected of some insight into German, and a

speculator, entered the apartment. The usual inquiries and replies having been made as to the health of the respective parties, and some undeniable propositions laid down touching the state of the weather, a short conversation followed upon the extraordinary rise in the shares of the *Pan-æthiopic, or Pleasant and Universal Burial Company*, of which Mr. Thugg was a managing director, and the Colonel, and Mr. Broughton at his instance, considerable shareholders. The party then sat down to their favourite game.

The Major and Mr. Thugg opposed Colonel Cooke and their host; and fortune proved singularly unpropitious to Mr. Broughton and his partner. In vain were seats and cards changed; the luck ran steadily against them. Their opponent Major Faulkland, invariably turned up an honour, and more than once held the four in his own hand.

"It was positively disagreeable," he vowed, "to be persecuted with such unvarying success;"—and he pocketed two or three of Mr. Broughton's guineas with proportionate regret.

"It is strange!" exclaimed the old gentleman, at length, as his friend marked another treble.

"Very," quietly rejoined the Major.

"It is d—d unaccountable!" growled Colonel Cooke.

Mr. Thugg said nothing, but continued to deal on in a very business-like way.

At this moment another knock was heard,—then a quick step on the stair,—and Mr. Frank Sherborne made his appearance. This young gentleman was slight in figure, and had an open and intelligent countenance, which bore, however, on this occasion an unusually clouded aspect. He referred the lateness of his arrival to some sudden business which had unexpectedly called him to a distant part of the town, as he was on the point of setting out to join the party.

Miss Magge gave a glance of vast intelligence to Clara, who received the explanation with cold politeness. Her manner, however, became more and more distant, to the great perplexity of Frank, and to the incipient uneasiness of Miss

Magge herself, who began to fear that she had been the cause of serious mischief. In vain did she attempt to rally them into good-humour; her undisguised efforts served but to confirm the awkwardness of both. At length she determined to leave them to themselves, the best specific in these cases; so telling the Colonel that she "knew he didn't like to be overlooked, but he need not mind her," she drew up her chair close to the elbow of that irascible gentleman, and set herself down formally to peruse his hand.

The *tête-à-tête*, thus enforced between the pair whom she had abandoned, was, however, productive of no satisfactory issue. To the few inquiries made by Clara as to the business that had detained Mr. Sherborne, that gentleman, for the first time in his life, returned evasive and embarrassed replies. Perceiving this, she was unable to restrain the strength of those suspicions which she had hitherto kept half smothered in her bosom. For a while she endeavoured to maintain a cool reserve; but her swelling heart

rendered the attempt abortive, and casting a look of bitter reproach upon the astounded Frank, she at length muttered a few words about "not being very well," and rushed in tears from the apartment.

CHAPTER II.

I'd as lieve ye would put ratsbane in my mouth as security!

Falstaff.

A JEW AND A GENTILE.—A HOMELY PROVERB, "FAIR WORDS BUTTER NO PARSNIPS."—"DONE AND DONE!" ENOUGH BETWEEN GENTLEMEN.—A FANDY FAIR—NOT SO FAIR AS ONE FANCIES.—A JUVENILE INDISCRETION.—AN AWKWARD RENCONTRE.

ABOUT three weeks had elapsed since the scene which we have been describing, when one of a very different character took place, to which we shall proceed forthwith to introduce the reader.

It had struck one o'clock; yet, although an unusually fine day, Major Faulkland's breakfast was not concluded. A cup of cold stagnant

coffee was by his side, surrounded by the usual adjuncts of a morning meal ; in addition to which, the table was furnished with a soda-water bottle or two, and a most ominous heap of legal-looking papers.

With his head resting on his hand, the Major was gazing thoughtfully on the decaying fire ; and if looks be any index to the mind, his thoughts had just then taken any rather than an enlivening turn.

Opposite to the Major sat an individual of a somewhat remarkable appearance. Though apparently not beyond the middle age, his forehead and the upper part of his head were completely bald, while a semicircle of thick black hair, almost resembling the Romish tonsure, extended to his temples, and there encountered a pair of large bushy whiskers. From beneath eyebrows which seemed to be a copy in miniature of the said whiskers, peered a couple of small, piercing, coal-black eyes ; his nose was aquiline, and the whole countenance was pervaded by a cunning, Jewish, look, which, despite an assumption of vulgar good-humour, lent it a most suspicious

and disagreeable expression. His figure, although stout, was powerful and active, and to judge from the expense and care—we say nothing as to the taste—with which it was bedizened, it might well be supposed that in the owner's opinion, at least, grace and elegance were by no means wanting. His coat was of a bright plum-colour, surmounted by a velvet collar "to match," and adorned with embossed gilt buttons of elaborate workmanship; a vest of satin scarf, sprinkled with gay flowers, protruded from a waistcoat of a pattern equally brilliant and variegated. Around his neck hung a massive gold (?) chain, which after a meandering course, midst buttons and button-holes, finally buried itself and was lost in a pocket on the left. Tight nankkeen pantaloons, and polished pumps, completed this gentleman's equipment.

"D—n it, Isaaks, the money must be raised!" exclaimed the Major, at length breaking silence.

Mr. Isaaks, who, with his elbows supported by his knees, was employed in balancing an expensive dress-cane across his forefingers, passed

for an instant, emitted a faint but prolonged whistle, and resumed his occupation with increased interest.

Faulkland rose hastily, strode once or twice across the apartment, then, fronting his imperturbable visitor, exclaimed,

"To make all smooth I'll draw for two thousand, and you shall give me a brace of hundreds in rags, bottles, bones, or any other infernal 'goods,' as you call them, you please."

Mr. Isaaks shook his head.

"Hell and the devil, man! what would you have?" cried Faulkland.

"Securities," briefly replied the Jew, grinning as if he had said a very good thing.

"Come, come, nonsense!" continued the Major; "no more fooling. I *must* have the money, and you know it.—If I can but hold together for three or four months longer, little Clara's fortune will set me square, and on that cast, remember, hangs your sole chance of regaining certain moneys advanced.—You understand me. And what, after all, is a thousand or so for such a venture? Surely my name——"

"Isn't good for so much as a shilling," quietly chimed in Mr. Isaaks.

Faulkland coloured and bit his lip.

"No—no.; it is not to be done, Major," continued the Jew, a cloud passing over the blandness of his countenance. "I am hit too hard already. The odds are against your ever touching a farthing of old Broughton's. The girl may gib.—You say yourself that she has turned off one lover already, within the last month."

"There lies my chance," eagerly interrupted Faulkland. "This Sherborne was the sole obstacle that stood between me and Fortune.—He is removed.—A breach has been effected between him and this giddy girl, which it shall be my care to widen day by day;—and thanks to one prating fool, I have my cue."

"Then the old boy may run rusty," suggested Mr. Isaaks.

"What matter's it?" returned the Major. "The estates are strictly entailed upon the heirs of his body, 'lawfully begotten.' No power on

earth can prevent Clara's coming in eventually for every acre."

"She may die, or he may marry," persevered the cautious money-lender. "A boy now would spoil all."

"Furies blight you!" exclaimed Faulkland, unable to control himself. "When money was wanted to stake at your accursed tables, it came readily enough. You would have pawned your Jewish soul to raise it.—My name was never doubted then; and now, when a few paltry hundreds more might retrieve all the thousands that your hells have swallowed, you 'll see me perish rather than try the venture.—Less, by Heaven, has driven a man to murder,"—and Faulkland clenched the knife which he had taken unconsciously from the table.

The Jew changed in an instant the bantering expression of his countenance to one stern and malignant.

"D'ye threaten me, Major Faulkland?" he cried, with fierceness,—“me who could crush you as you stand.—See this,” said the Sheriff's

officer—for Mr. Isaaks was “a pluralist,” and combined that profession with those of money-lender and gambling-house proprietor,—and he pointed to a slip of paper by his side.

A momentary pause ensued, which was again broken by the Jew.

“Come, come, take it coolly, Major, and sit down. I’ll stand by you yet;—for the sake of old acquaintance you *shall* have six hundred down in cash, a hundred in champagne, and Skyscraper—you know the horse—he will be a good three hundred in your hands; and if that’s not the handsome thing, why, damme, I don’t know what is.”

This, which was intended as the “clinch” argument, did not appear to strike Major Faulkland with overwhelming force. At first he seemed inclined to expostulate. Mr. Isaaks drew on a delicate pair of “lemon kids,”

“Seven hundred, cash, and I sign,” pursued the Major.

His friend put on his hat slightly on one side, and looked at his watch.

“Give me the paper,” said Faulkland.

Mr. Isaaks pulled off his hat, removed his lemon-coloured gloves, and dropped his watch into his pocket.

The necessary deeds were signed, a portion of the sum was handed over, and arrangements were entered into for the payment of the remainder. This done, the obliging visiter, with many flourishes and obsequious bows took his departure.

"Show the gentleman out!" exclaimed the Major, ringing the bell,—“show him to——” but the door had closed and the remainder of the direction was unheard or unheeded.

* * * * *

By two o'clock on the same day all was bustle and excitement in the show-room over Mr. Smugs's emporium. Ladies of various sizes, ages, and complexions, were running down stairs, popping their heads in at the shop-door, and then running up again. Mr. Smugs's name rang from at least a dozen pair of female lips.

"What can have become of Mr. Smugs? Pray send him up."

Mr. Smugs, however, had been "sent up" about fifty times already, and, perceiving every probability of being sent up fifty times more, he had prudently withdrawn to a *symposium* in the vicinity, leaving strict orders not to be disturbed, and abandoning the vast *emporium pro tempore* to the care and especial superintendence of his real Chinese, one Sau Li Chim,—or Jem Sawley, as he was called by those who were "inwards with him" on Sundays, and other periods of undress.

Around the private door stood three or four personages, with certain green baize bags in their possession, from which peeped out divers instruments of musical torture. Porter in "the pewter" was passed in solemn silence from one to the other, when a stout man, with a red face, white neckcloth, and dingy habiliments, exclaimed, as he transferred the empty pot to the junior of the party.

"I tell ye what, gentlemen, I can't stand these here Charity goes, and that's all about it: my constitution can't bear 'em. Hot rooms and no Heavy don't suit my complaint no hows,

I pines for the blowing breezes and the wild sea foam."

"And the brandy-and-water," interposed a young man, whose hair, face, and dingy apparel were of one and the same whity-brown hue.

"*And the brandy-and-water, sir,*" repeated the stout gentleman, sharply. "Only to think," he added, in a milder and more melancholy tone, "such an uncommon fine day, and that blessed *Wenus* agone to Margate without us."

"But it pays better," suggested the young man. — A circumstance which it was not unnatural that he should regard, seeing that he had left at home a sick wife, and three young children.

"Pays!" returned the first speaker, in an accent of supreme contempt, — he was unencumbered save by his French horn. — "What if it does? — Where's the excitement, when you may blow your heart out, and not get a farden more than you agrees for. — No; give me the voluntary system: then there's a hobject in keeping up the steam."

All further reflections were cut short by the

opening of the door, and a request that "the band" would walk up, and not make a dirt on the stairs. The band accordingly wiped its shoes, and obeyed the summons.

The room which Miss Magge and Co. had engaged for a grand fancy bazaar occupied the whole first floor, above a toy-shop in the immediate neighbourhood of the Regent's Circus; it had been originally built as a concert-room by a company of speculators, who, failing in their primary object, were glad to let it out for any and for every purpose, from the Bacchanalian orgies of the club of choice spirits, down to the more sober expectorations of tea-total oratory; it was now fitted up with a great deal of taste for the occasion. Various stalls, somewhat in the shape of tents, were reared against the sides, the name of the separate proprietors depending in pink and silver blazonry over each, while the extremities of the apartment were occupied by the stations of the lady patronesses; affixed to two of which, in all the dignity of purple and gold, shone forth the names of the Ladies Theodosia Cannonbury and Smithson Smith.

The last-named of these two ladies, appareled with the utmost magnificence, had already taken up her position, and sat surrounded by a committee of obsequious juniors. She was in every respect a very great personage, the spouse of a gallant knight, and weighed from thirteen to fourteen stone. Sir Smithson Smith had originally been in the Italian warehouse line; but had nobly won his spurs by presenting a civic address on the departure of a fit of royal indigestion. No sooner had plain Mistress been metamorphosed into the no less plain Lady Smithson Smith, than her husband was *induced*, by a system of matrimonial persuasion, to relinquish the superintendence of pickles, French mustard, and macaroni, and to make over the retail business to his eldest son. Meanwhile, the lady abandoned herself to the cultivation of "Shakspere, Taste, and the Musical glasses." On the present occasion she had kindly consented to act as patroness of a "grand fancy bazaar," the proceeds of which were to be applied to the benefit of the "juvenile and oppressed chimney-sweeps" of the Metropolis.

Her Ladyship was now listening with great condescension to a long history from Miss Magge touching the arrangements made, the profits to be calculated on, and the assemblage expected of rank and fashion, &c. &c.

"And, what do you think," said the latter, in conclusion, "I have got to arouse their sensibilities when they do come?"

Lady Smithson graciously declared that "She had not the most remotest idea."

"What should you say?" continued Miss Magge, with a triumphant look around,—“what should you say to a couple of dear little real juvenile oppressed chimney-sweeps to stand at the door?"

"Goodness gracious preserve me!" ejaculated the lady patroness, in the most unaffected alarm. "You don't mean to say we are to have any nasty dirty little boys running about the premises? — the odious filths! — I can't endure them!"

Miss Magge hastened to explain to the alarmed lady that her "specimens" had been previously parboiled in soap and water; that their

habiliments were not to be really sooty, but only "make-believe;" and farther, that they were both to be furnished with clean shirts, "turn-down collars," black silk stockings and mourning gloves.

"The band" now—who were almost smothered in an arbour of evergreens, — struck up a set of quadrilles with great spirit and independence; the doors were thrown open, and Miss Magge hastened to place an oppressed chimney-sweep on either side of the entrance. Each of these interesting young personages distributed to the visitors glazed cards, on which were described in pathetic terms and gilt letters, the narrowness of chimneys, the tyranny of master-sweeps, and all the complicated horrors of the present climbing system.

As the rooms began to fill, the young ladies were soon engaged in exhibiting purses, card-racks, and every description of those elaborate trifles which enable the idle and the wealthy to display their charity(?) at the expense of certain widows and orphan daughters of half-pay officers and country curates, who derive a scanty

subsistence from the construction of such knick-knacks, and of whom scores are thrown out of bread for six weeks to come by every "Fancy Fair."—We say nothing of the exhibition of their own sweet persons, at the moderate rate of two and sixpence a head.

Clara stood listlessly by the stall of her friend, Miss Magge, having been prohibited by her father from taking any active part in the "humbug," as he most irreverently termed this laudable retailing of small wares. A pensive expression had stolen over her fine and gentle countenance, and though an answering smile would sometimes faintly respond to the ecstasies of her friend on putting off a twopenny pincushion for "two and sixpence," or the happy disposal of a pair of eleemosynary shirt-buttons, it was evident that her thoughts were far away.

A couple of hours had slipped away, when a slight commotion at the lower end of the apartment indicated the arrival of Lady Theodosia Cannonbury, accompanied by her brother and Major Faulkland. The latter having presented Clara, Miss Magge, and Mr. Broughton, to his

distinguished friends, was next compelled to perform the same kind office for Lady Smithson Smith, who had bustled up, followed by her son.

This young gentleman, although celebrated on ordinary occasions among his intimates for his nonchalance and unstudied demeanour, showed symptoms of considerable embarrassment in his present position. He endeavoured to twist his moustache with an air of unconcern. As the said moustache, however, was somewhat scant of growth, and not to be trifled with, he had recourse to a head of very intractable hair, still without obtaining any decided relief. In vain did he summon that self-possession by which he was so distinguished at the "Coal Hole," and other places of fashionable resort; when the moment of introduction arrived, he felt, as he subsequently declared, in his own peculiar phraseology, "all hookem snivey, and no mistake."

No sooner had Lady Theodosia taken her appointed station than the crowd gradually drew towards that quarter of the room. The Greg-

sons and the Dugsons were companionless ; — the Johnsons and Thompsons looked affable in vain ; — the Hobbes's, the Dobbs's, and the Snobbs's were alike forsaken. — Even Lady Smithson Smith sat in solitary grandeur.

Faulkland seized this opportunity of prosecuting his suit with Clara. Leading the conversation to the late rarity of Sherborne's visits to Russell Square, and touching on a change in his manners which had been observed by more than one of his acquaintance, the Major kindly proceeded to extenuate his conduct.

" Frank was very young," he said ; " the temptations of London were so numerous ; and so strong ; — it was necessary for a man to see something of life ; — he would be all the steadier for it by and by."

The Major watched with satisfaction the working of offended pride which he saw was going on in the fair girl's countenance, and proceeded the more earnestly in his friend's defence.

" Really, Major Faulkland," exclaimed Clara

at length, "you give yourself much unnecessary trouble in explaining your friend's conduct. — Mr. Sherborne may spend his time where and how he pleases. — I have neither the right nor the inclination to pry into his pursuits."

The Major sighed, and observing a tear gathering in the eye of his companion, gently took her hand.

"Pardon me, my dear Miss Broughton," he said, in a low soft tone, "if I am not as readily, as I would willingly be, deceived by this indifference; but, no,—it shall be my aim to restore to you, if possible, one in whose happiness your own is so materially involved."

At this moment, Mr. Smithson Smith, who had regained much of his usual composure, stepped up, and, gathering a coat-tail gracefully under each arm, expressed his opinion that Fancy bazaars appeared to him, the said Smithson Smith, to be infernally slow proceedings.

"Sir," said Major Faulkland, with any but an encouraging glance.

"Slow," repeated Mr. Smith, colouring, and

dropping his coat-tails ; — “ that is — I mean seedy — heavy, you know ? — uncommon heavy — you understand ? ”

“ Not exactly, sir,” returned Faulkland, with gravity ; “ but the gentlemen whom you have just quitted very possibly may.”

Before Mr. Smithson Smith could fully comprehend the hint thus significantly delivered, a disturbance at the door attracted universal attention, and he bounded off accordingly to discover “ what was the row ? ”

Entreaties for mercy were now heard, interspersed with solemn invocations of the police. Every one hurried to the spot where one of the little oppressed chimney-sweeps was discovered struggling in the grasp of the inexorable Mr. Thugg.

It appeared upon inquiry that as that gentleman was entering the room, he discovered a hand of the individual in question inserted in his own coat-pocket ; and, not being remarkable for much delicacy of sentiment, he forthwith transferred the little interesting, oppressed juvenile, to the

guardianship of a policeman, despite the passionate remonstrances of Miss Magge, and her declarations that "there must have been some mistake."

"I'm not to be done, ma'am!" said the unmoved Thugg. — But done he was, as he discovered some few minutes after, to his utter dismay, — done, out of a gold watch, chain, and seals. A fact which he connected with the sudden disappearance of the other little "victim," who from the moment of his companion's arrest had disappeared, and was

"Like the lost Pleiad, seen on earth no more."

During this little fracas, Lady Theodosia and Lord Adolphus had contrived to effect their escape uninterrupted. The Eastern dignitary, indeed, alone observed the departure, and she was much too anxious for the recovery of her own apostate subjects to oppose any bar to it.

Shortly afterwards, the Broughtons, accompanied by Faulkland, who had dined with them, took their leave, the old gentleman grumbling

all the way down stairs at the unceremonious appropriation of a ten-pound note which he had tendered at a stall on purchasing a two shilling watch-guard. Lady Smithson, the illustrious *marchande*, received it with a most bewitching smile, dropped him a most bewitching curtsy, and, deeming that probably an equivalent for the balance, thanked him for his liberality, with an intimation that they "never gave change."

Mr. Broughton was all amazement,* but prudently confined his indignation to a prolonged series of muttering; from which, however, it might be gathered, that he was instituting in his own mind a comparison between the respective claims of the Lady Patroness and the Chimney-sweep to "a month on the mill." As for Miss Magge, nothing could seduce that enthusiastic

* The heir of a noble house, "fat, fair," but considerably under "forty," is said to have been perfectly *consterné* at a similar intimation. In vain did he represent that he could not afford to lose "the difference," being, as he averred, "the Prodigal Son." The fair tradeswoman, who had so charitably sold him his "bargain," only smiled and said, he looked much more like the "Fatted Calf."

personage from the field, while a single young gentleman remained to be coaxed or shamed out of his solitary half-sovereign.

During the drive home the presence of the dissatisfied purchaser prevented any renewal of the conversation that had been so inopportunistically disturbed by young Mr. Smith ; but as the carriage, which had somewhat diverged from the direct route homewards for the sake of a drive round the Regent's Park, emerged from the Circus at the extremity of Portland Place, Faulkland suddenly pressed his fair companion's arm, and directed her attention to two persons then in the act of crossing the New Road.

'Twas he, indeed !—Her worst fears were realised. —Frank Sherborne was before her, and a female was hanging with seeming affection upon his arm.

Clara sank back, and hid her crimsoning face in her hands. She felt bewildered, stunned by the blow ; and among the confused images that crowded upon her brain, the form of her newly-found rival was ever recurring. There was some-

thing in that person's air, that struck strangely upon her recollection. More than once did she endeavour to grapple with it, but, like some dimly-remembered dream, it fled intangible ; still some chord of memory, long untouched, had been partially awakened, and the dying tone yet lingered on her ear.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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SOME ACCOUNT OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

VOL. III.

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SOME ACCOUNT OF
MY COUSIN NICHOLAS.

BY THOMAS INGOLDSBY, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS."

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

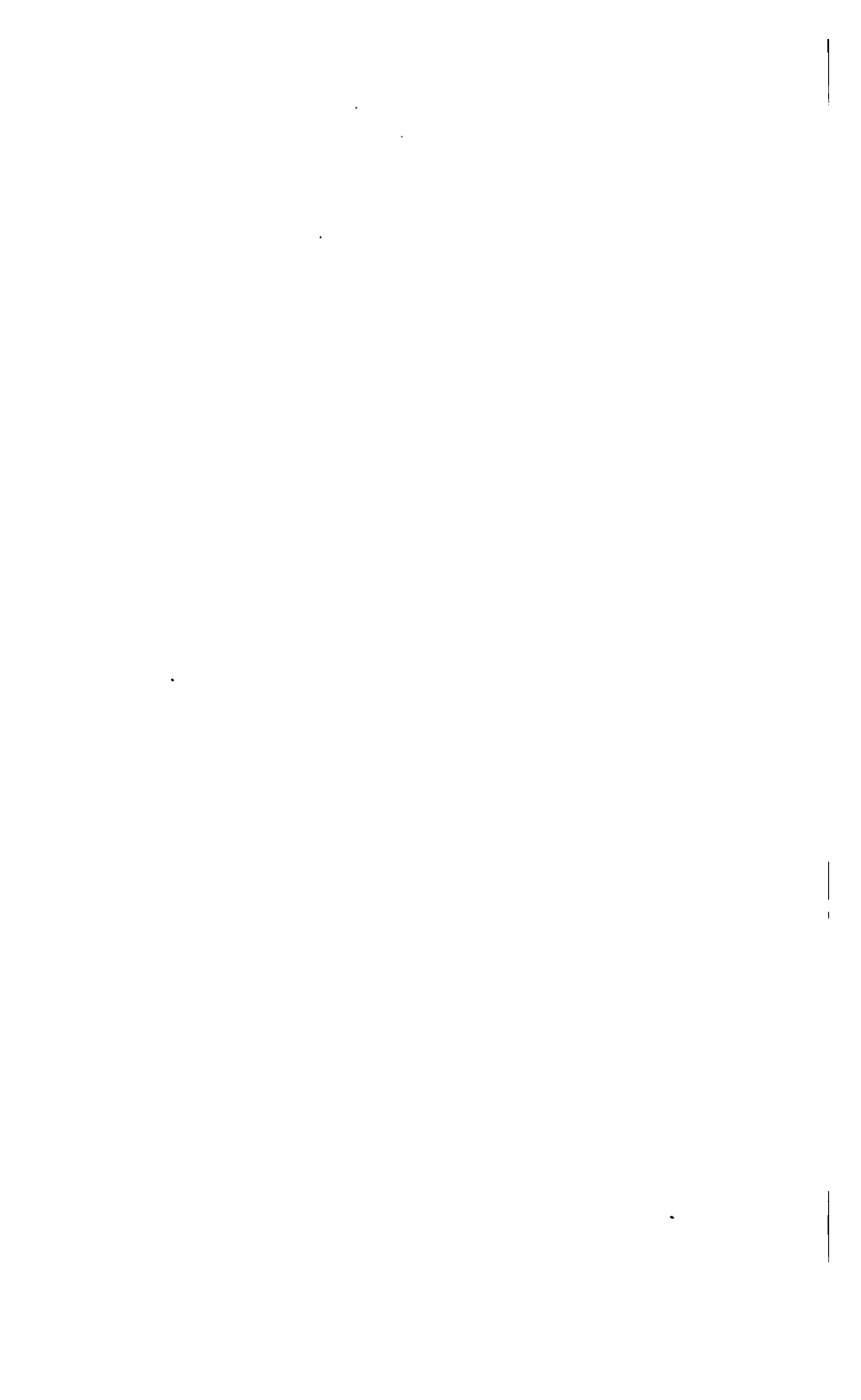
LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

BY DALTON INGOLDBY.

GAME THE FIRST.



GAME THE FIRST.

THE BRIDE.

CHAPTER III.

'Tis he ! 'Tis he !—I know him now !
I know him by his pallid brow,
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery.
'Tis he ! well met in any hour
Lost Leila's love !

BYRON.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR. — AN ARTFUL DODGER. — AN
EXQUISITE. — A PEEP AT PANDÆMONIUM.

WE must now request the gentle reader to tramp with us up three pair of dirty, dark and dingy stairs to an attic story in Fig-tree Court, Temple.

Why " Fig-tree Court ? — why *Fig-tree Court* ? " asketh, perhaps, our inquisitive friend.

—Mark now our answer.—Because it hath *no* Fig-tree! — no tree of any kind — though there are some very tolerable imitations of trees, it must be confessed, in the “Gardens” not far off.—Because it hath no Fig-tree!—and, therefore, like Mr. Bottom’s dream, is aptly so termed, because that “had no bottom,”—or, to adopt the first three feet of a late Finsbury *hexameter*,

“Lucus a non lucendo!”

No matter for that, as Mr. Brulgruddery philosophically observes.

Fig-tree Court was the place, nor let the gentle reader aforesaid turn up his nose at the elevation which we request him to attain,—we would have him to know, that, in what would vulgarly be termed “Garrets” elsewhere, have resided, and yet reside, many of the flower of Britain’s youth—the setting and rising Justinians of the empire—men who have toiled long, and early, and late—who “from the nettle” Difficulty, have “plucked out the flower” Fame; many of whom have made their facile descent from these “parlours nearest the sky,” and at a single bound

"*squatted*," as our Yankee friends have it, on the rubicund elasticity of the Woolsack itself.

It is into one of these Legal Observatories that we now venture to intrude, and there, rocking himself backwards and forwards in a sort of skeleton arm-chair of transatlantic construction, in the front of an expiring fire, we shall behold a young gentleman in a brown study.

"What can be the meaning of it?" exclaimed Frank Sherborne, tossing uneasily in his seat,—"father and daughter—both alike, both cold and distant as the North Pole.—I can bear this no longer. I am resolved at once to learn the 'very head and front of my offending.'"

Mr. Sherborne started up, seized a portfolio, selected a patent Perryan pen, and paused to reflect.

It was really a somewhat delicate question which he was about to put. The old gentleman's altered fortune might perchance be beginning to work an alteration in his feelings. Clara, too, she whom he had loved from his earliest years—ere he knew what love was even by

name, might perhaps have yielded to the attractions of some wealthier or more fashionable rival.

Mr. Sherborne grasped his pen as if it had been a tomakawk, levelled at some "more fashionable rival's" scalp.

"But pooh!—nonsense! Clara cannot be faithless: it must be some foolish misunderstanding, some silly misconstruction,—my own, perhaps. Here's for a dive to the bottom of the affair." So saying, he struck off with great resolution into "My dear"—he paused——"Shall I not say, 'dearest?'—'dear' certainly seems somewhat cool."

While yet deliberating on the respective merits of the positive and superlative degrees of the adjective 'cool,' a loud knock at his outer door arrested his proceedings. He listened; the door was opened; hurried steps were heard along his very brief passage, and a female, clad in a plaid cloak, and wearing a black velvet bonnet, the long lace veil which depended from it quite obscuring her features, entered the apartment, and sank breathless into a chair.

Sherborne, however, was evidently at no loss as to the identity of his visiter, he threw down his pen, and pushed aside the writing-table.

“What strange chance can have brought you here, and at this hour?” inquired he, rising, and taking the hand of his companion.

She grasped it convulsively.

“Oh! Frank,” she sobbed, “I—I have seen him—seen him—I have even touched him!”

“Then, Heaven be thanked!” cried Sherborne: “but compose yourself, my dear Julia, and tell me where and when you have met with ——” He paused, and for some minutes a silence ensued, broken only by the sobs of the lady—at length she raised her head.

She was young, and might have been justly called beautiful, but that the light of hope and health seemed quenched in her pale face for ever. Her features were finely chiseled, and her large blue eye was pregnant with intelligence, but the former were ashy pale, and the latter was dimmed as by some rooted sorrow. She seemed too surely marked as one doomed to an early grave; and the thoughts of him,

who now gazed on her, involuntarily glanced forward to that dim mysterious world, whither she was fast hastening to her rest.

She wiped the tears from her long eyelashes as she said more calmly, —

“ Frank, my information was correct, and there is yet a chance of attaining my long-sought object. He is in London, and I have seen him. — Listen.

“ My poor infant had an accession of fever this evening. Dr. Harrison made an alteration in his prescription, and to ensure its being immediately prepared, I carried it to the dispensary myself. I was returning when two men brushed by me, and stopped a few paces in advance. One was talking loudly, and appeared to be intoxicated ; the other seemed endeavouring to restrain him. I wrapped my shawl closer around me, hoping to repass them unobserved, when the voice of the former aroused my attention : its tones were but too familiar to my ear. I gazed on him, and recognized Coryton, — him whom you have so often heard me mention as Henry’s intimate friend ; and Henry — Henry himself, was by his side !

"Sick and giddy from the emotions which assailed me, with difficulty I saved myself from sinking upon the ground—"

"But you did not leave them?—You did not lose sight of them?" inquired Frank, with apprehension;—"you have not thrown away the clue thus fortunately attained?"

"No," resumed the lady, "confused as I was, and ignorant of the subject on which Henry was speaking, I yet caught the parting words of his companion.

"'Farewell,' he said, 'you'll meet me then at 'The Nick.' Remember, half-past eleven,—and I don't wait a single second after twelve.'

"The parties then separated, and were quickly out of sight. I was too weak, had I even possessed sufficient courage, to follow them,—and then my child—my suffering babe—I but returned to convey to him the so-much-needed restorative, and then I flew to you—to you my only hope—"

"The Nick?" repeated Sherborne, musingly; "I never before heard of the place,—from the name, I should judge it to be some low haunt

of gamblers: but, no matter; were it the foulest den in all London, I would not fail to confront him there. — We must set out, and that immediately," he continued. "As I escort you home you must describe to me as accurately as possible the appearance of these two gentlemen; and then, if I can but fall in with Hazeldine, who has, I believe, the *entrée* at every house of this description in the metropolis, admittance to the place of rendezvous may doubtless be easily procured."

In a few minutes Frank was ready to attend his fair but fragile visiter. She hung heavily upon his arm as they walked on; and although from consideration for her manifest debility he proceeded but slowly, her tottering steps could scarcely keep pace with his, had passed the postern opening into the narrow court which once formed part of the "pleasaunce" belonging to the gallant, generous, but rash and unfortunate Devereux, from whom it still retains its name.

They had threaded the Strand, and were pursuing their way up Southampton Street, when

the lady, pressing her companion's arm, observed in a voice trembling with alarm,—“ Frank, observe that man, I feel satisfied that he is following and watching us.”

Frank turned quickly round, and beheld a person not many yards behind them, who was apparently regarding himself and his companion with some attention. The individual, however, if such had indeed been his employment, instantly transferred his gaze to the brilliantly illuminated window of a shop at the corner of the street ; his back was now towards them which precluded all possibility of distinguishing his features ; soon after, crossing the road, he lounged carelessly on, and disappeared.

Sherborne endeavoured to rally his companion out of her fears, and proceeded to demonstrate most logically that, as there was nothing in their appearance unusual or likely to arouse curiosity, nothing tempting to excite cupidity, while their own proper persons could not possibly be supposed to excite interest from any other cause, the intentions of the gentleman in question must have been misconstrued. All this, though highly

reasonable, appeared to fall somewhat short of producing conviction in the lady's mind, a fact only to be accounted for by the unhappy prejudice which some people have in favour of trusting to their own eyes and ears, rather than to the most philosophical deductions from abstract truth.

Julia shook her head, and hoped "she was mistaken."

"I have little need," she said, "Heaven knows! of imaginary ills to disturb me."

"Fear none," replied Sherborne, cheerfully; "all will soon be well; with the clue you have this evening gained, we cannot fail to discover your faithless husband. That effected, our course will be a smooth one. And now, touching this friend of his,—this Mr. Coryton;—he is, you say, tall, has reddish hair, and a deep scar upon the upper lip.—How was he dressed?"

"I could scarcely distinguish, save that he was wrapped in a large military cloak."

"No matter, I am sure of him. Now describe to me his principal. A mistake there might indeed be a fatal one."

The lady dropped her eyes towards the ground.

"He is not so tall as his friend," she said, "but handsome, — very handsome ; his hair is black and curling, and —— ah ! see !—we *are* watched, — that same horrid-looking man is still tracking us."

During the conversation which had passed between them, the details of which we have thought it unnecessary to give, as the results will appear hereafter, the friends had traversed the purlieus of Soho and had now just entered upon Tottenham-Court Road, — Sherborne, turning his eyes across the way, again distinctly saw a person resembling the man who had before been pointed out to him. He was farther off than on the former occasion, but, seemingly, not the less anxious to keep his game in view.

Frank's first impulse was, to confront and question his unknown observer ; but, on consideration, being unable to call to mind any act of the legislature that prohibited persons from walking up Tottenham-Court Road at ten o'clock in the evening, and not feeling perfectly certain

as to the identity of the individual in question, he determined rather to counteract his plans (did any exist) by stratagem than to repel them by more decided measures. Accordingly, he took the first turning that presented itself, and, quickening his pace, hurried the frightened girl through a maze of courts and streets, till he reached at length one in the immediate neighbourhood of the New Road.

“Thank Heaven we are at home!” faintly exclaimed Julia, almost overcome with fatigue. “This is the door.”

As the posts of the said door were garnished with a variety of brass-plates, and a nearly equal number of bell-handles, under other circumstances Sherborne might have hesitated which of the latter to select for his particular ringing; as it was, he at once seized the largest of them, and gave a hearty pull.

A dirty slip-shod girl replied after some delay to the summons; but perceiving the applicant did not belong to “her floor,” withdrew abruptly, expressing certain comments in lan-

guage not strictly in accordance with her youth or sex, upon all indiscriminating visitors.

At this moment a man brushed hastily by.— He was gone in an instant, but not before the lady had recognised, or fancied that she had recognised, in him her persevering attendant. Frank felt rather nettled at the idea of being thus dogged; but, with the reluctance which we generally feel to admit our having been out-generaled, persisted, as he followed Julia up stairs, that she must have been mistaken.

Passing one or two doors that opened on the common staircase, they at length entered an apartment of greater comfort and neatness than the exterior had promised. In it by the side of a cheerful fire sat an elderly woman, three parts asleep, but with just sufficient energy left to continue rocking a small cradle which stood at her knee.

“There is my child,—my boy” said Julia, eagerly taking Sherborne by the hand, and advancing, as mothers only do advance, with him towards the tiny resting-place.

The elderly lady had by this time recovered the use of the remainder of her faculties, and seemed to be employing them all most earnestly in the contemplation of Frank. She repeatedly opened and shut a pair of remarkably large eyes, winked and blinked, and assumed an expression (for which her features and head-dress were peculiarly adapted) much resembling that of a respectable and elderly owl shocked at some alarming breach of ornithological decorum.

The invalid meanwhile continued to bend over her sleeping infant. Her tears fell fast upon its little coverlet.

"Yes," she said, "for his dear sake I must and will struggle on a little longer; but Frank, — promise me once more — when I am gone, guard and protect my child. I have none other on earth to whom I can confide him."

"You will need none," replied Frank, pressing the thin hand that yet lingered in his. "While I live, that boy shall be to me as mine own."

Julia turned her eyes upon the young man,

and if eyes can speak heartfelt thanks, hers needed no other utterance.

“Start not,” she continued, “at the word, but—I am dying ! I know it, but dread it not.—Could I once see that dear child acknowledged and provided for, I should lay my head upon the green turf far more willingly than I shall this night place it upon my pillow.”

In vain did Sherborne urge her to dismiss such gloomy thoughts from her mind ; persuasions and encouragements were alike vain ; he saw, he felt them to be so ; he turned therefore the conversation, somewhat abruptly perhaps, once more to the object of his search, and having made a few more inquiries, prepared to depart. The old lady, evidently much relieved by this movement, lighted him with great alacrity to the stairs.

“Heaven bless you !” said her mistress, “and Heaven will bless you, Frank !—I shall never live to see it.—But when all is bright above and around you, give an occasional thought to old times, and to the hapless Julia.”

Frank pursued his way with a quick step,

though with anything but a light heart. The sad lot of her whom he had just quitted affected him deeply, nor could he help in some way connecting it with the strange alteration in the behaviour of the Broughtons towards himself. At all events, laden with such a secret as that he was bound in honour to preserve, he now felt an increased awkwardness in demanding an explanation from them, when he also felt that he was in no position to offer one in return.

"I will state the whole case unreservedly to Julia," said he at length. "She will relieve me from my promise, and all shall be unraveled."

Fully occupied with his meditations, he scarcely noticed the passengers whom he occasionally ran against, nor listened to the "curses, not loud but deep," which these fortuitous collisions occasionally extracted from them, till having crossed Oxford Street and partly perambulated the magnificent thoroughfare which derives its name from the "Regal Minority" of the fourth George, he reached the Albany, and rapped at Mr. Hazeldine's door.

On announcing his name, Sherborne was

shown into a luxuriously furnished apartment on the ground-floor, abounding with all that variety of easy chairs, ottomans, fauteuils, and sofas, which the self-indulgence of modern times requires. After some minutes, he heard an indistinct voice from an adjoining room inquire,

“ Frank, is that really and positively you ? ”
Having stated that he had not the slightest reason to doubt his own identity, the same voice replied, “ Then you may make your appearance.”

Guided by the sound, Frank passed through a half-opened door at the farther corner of the apartment, and found himself in an exceedingly comfortable little recess of a mixed character, partly dressing-room, partly study, in about the proportion of five parts of the former to one of the latter. Shelves at its sides were supplied, on Prince Potemkin’s plan, with a very fair allowance of “ little books at top, and large books at bottom,” interspersed with expensive meerschaums, gun-cases, fishing-rods, bows, foils, fencing-masks, and whips for every purpose, and of every description. There were also more easy-chairs, and another sofa.

On the latter, reclined at full length, a young man, of rather effeminate appearance, and clad, notwithstanding the hour, in a sort of fashionable undress, and solacing himself with a hookah. Unfolding his elegant shawl-patterned gown with much deliberation, he half rose as Sherborne entered.

"George," said the latter, advancing towards him, "I have need of your instant advice and assistance."

"Affair of honour?" said the young gentleman, with something like vivacity.

"No, no," replied Sherborne, "nothing of that kind."

"Lady—eh?" inquired Mr. Hazeldine, dropping an eye-glass, which he had raised and fixed to one of his eyes by a forcible contraction of the brow above, for the purpose of ascertaining that it really was Mr. Sherborne, and no one else, who had penetrated into his Sanctum under false pretences.

"No, nor a lady," returned Frank.

"Well, then, what the devil can it be?" pursued his friend, sinking back with an air of

languid disappointment. "Explain as soon as you can without personal inconvenience."

Thus saying he raised his feet again to the sofa, adjusted the cushion which supported his head with an air strongly deprecatory of the exertion, and reclosed his eyes as in helpless resignation.

"To be brief, then," returned Sherborne, "I am in search of a certain Captain Montague, who I understand is to be met with to-night in some place called 'The Nick.' Are you acquainted either with this person or his retreat?"

"Extraordinary!" responded Mr. George Hazeldine. "As for Captain Montague, you see, my dear fellow, there are so many of them.—All unattached captains,—I say nothing of Christinos and Columbians,—are Montagues,—or Percies,—or Beauforts, and all that sort of thing. But as for 'The Nick,' you can't mean seriously to assert that you don't know where 'The Nick' is to be found?" And Mr. Hazeldine turning himself half round, refitted the glass to his eye for the purpose of examining such a fine specimen of barbaric ignorance.

Frank, nevertheless, met his glance unshrinking, and fairly confessed that he knew nothing of the place in question.

“ Monstrous ! ” ejaculated his friend, sinking back into his former position.

“ Well—take pity on my want of knowledge, and enlighten me,” said Frank.

“ Buy a great square book,” replied Mr. Hazeldine, “ and study geography,—and the use of the globes.”

“ Come, come,” said Frank, growing impatient, “ I have no time for this nonsense ; I must find this person, and that without delay. Will you, or will you not aid me in the search ? ”

“ Why you see,—my dear Frank,—as you make a point of it—eh !—but it’s d—d annoying though,” lisped the gentleman, who would not have hesitated to subscribe himself his “ most particular friend.”

After a little more dallying, Mr. Hazeldine was at length prevailed upon to dress. Here was another trial for poor Sherborne’s endurance. He bore it, however, like a martyr ; and his friend at length declared himself to be ready.

They had passed into the drawing-room, when Mr. Hazeldine's glance happened to light upon Frank's habiliments. He paused, quietly re-seated himself, and having recourse once more to his glass, ran his eye leisurely over that gentleman's whole person.

"Come," cried the latter, his hand upon the door, "time presses.—What is the matter now? — What are you staring at? — Anything the matter with my coat?"

"Coat!" repeated Mr. Hazeldine. "Coat! Merciful Providence! do you call that a coat? —it is a Coffin?"

"Folly!" said Frank, half inclined to be angry; but reflecting that such a course was by no means calculated to aid his purpose or to render his society more agreeable to his friend, he checked himself. "Coat or no coat," he continued, with an attempt at pleasantry which every muscle in his countenance belied, "it shall do you no discredit.

'Lo! I have a cloak—
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's back.'

"Yes—that's playful—very," persisted the immoveable Hazeldine; "but I really cannot lend myself to such a cloak as that; it would be a social suicide.—And boots too!—extraordinary! Pray, where on earth are such boots to be procured?—I suppose you *do* call them boots?"

Frank was beginning to lose his temper in earnest, but after some little more diplomacy, the business was at length compromised; Frank covenanting on the one side to screw himself into a fashionable surtout, the property of his host,—the latter, on the other hand, submitting to put the boots,—or rather his objections to them,—into his pocket.

A short walk brought the friends to the house in question. It appeared to be a common gambling-house, and one of no very lofty description, or what is technically termed a "Silver Hell."

On the delivery of some mysterious watch-word given by Hazeldine they were admitted instantly by the obsequious porter, and, ascending a narrow staircase, defended at the top by

a massive-looking door, after certain preliminaries had been gone through, entered the rooms.

True to his supposed engagement, Mr. Coryton was easily recognised. He was standing aloof from the crowd of foreign nobility (?), apprentices, shopmen, and military-looking gentlemen, with which the place was honoured, taking no active part in the proceedings of the evening. He leant negligently against the wall, having a thumb inserted into each arm-hole of his waistcoat, which graceful attitude, much in vogue among pseudo-gentry, served also to display various specimens of jewelry of a somewhat questionable manufacture, that sparkled on his hands and breast. From the anxious glances which he occasionally threw towards the door, especially on the entrance of any new comer, it was clear that he was awaiting an arrival.

Hazeldine, once entered, was soon engaged in all the mysteries of roulette, and being an adept, lost a small sum which he had volunteered to manage for Frank, with great ease, and in a

very few minutes, without any perceptible dissatisfaction.

The time passed much more slowly with his friend. He gazed on but scarcely marked the flushed faces, the starting eyes, and trembling hands before him ; he heard not the execrations of the novice, nor appreciated the coolness of the practised gamester ; — his sole attention was fixed on Coryton.

Visitors came and departed ; some of whom merely nodded to, others exchanged a few words with, this worthy ; but the person evidently expected did not appear. — Twelve o'clock struck — half-past — and at length Mr. Coryton, who had been remarkably fidgetty for some time, was heard to observe to a Jewish-looking personage by his side.

“ He ’ll not be here to-night, so I ’m off to the Lady Mother’s :—he can follow if he wants me.”

Thus saying Mr. Coryton lounged quietly across the room, stared coolly at Sherborne, whose observation of him he now for the first time appeared to notice, and departed.

Frank felt assured that all further delay was useless, and endeavoured to prevail upon his guide to accompany him home. Hazeldine, however, was now flushed with champagne and success, and could not be induced to stir, Frank in consequence proceeded to return without him.

He had arrived at the end of the narrow passage leading into the street, and paused for an instant to consider what might be the best course for him to pursue. While yet in doubt, a passenger stopped immediately opposite, gazed on him as the glare of the lamp above shone full upon his person, and exclaiming, "Merciful Heaven! — Can I believe my eyes? — Sherborne — Frank — and coming out of such a place!" — passed rapidly on.

It was Mr. Broughton.

For a moment Sherborne stood as if paralyzed—gradually his situation, so open to misconstruction, rose vividly before him—he felt that it must be accounted for on the spot. He hurried after the old gentleman for that purpose.

— The opportunity was lost: Mr. Broughton was already out of sight.

“Provoking!” muttered Frank, “and doubly so just now; but, however, everything shall be explained to-morrow.”

CHAPTER IV.

Cassio, I love thee,
But never more be officer of mine.

SHAKESPEARE.

NOT AT HOME.—A COOL EXCLUSION, AND A WARM RECEPTION.—STOCK AT A DISCOUNT.—BEEF AT A PREMIUM.—PHILOSOPHY OF AN EX-DIRECTOR.—THE INTERCEPTED LETTER.

“To-morrow,—aye, to-morrow,” replied a respectable middle-aged gentleman, when called upon to explain certain passages in his earlier life, owing to which delay a highly interesting series of fires, massacres, pilferings, and other instances of sentimental felony has been lost to the public. Frank’s reckoning seemed to be as indefinitely prolonged as the one alluded to ; and

there were many obstacles to be overcome, of which he knew nothing, ere he could regain his position in the affections of the Broughtons. He was, indeed, aware that the old gentleman was rarely out of his own house after eleven o'clock, and that, therefore, the affair was likely to make the deeper impression on his mind ; but he was not aware that, on this particular occasion, he happened to be moreover in an especial ill-humour, and accordingly not at all disposed to take the most favourable view of any object that might present itself.

The shares of the "Pan-edu-taphic, or Pleasant and Universal Burial Company," had that very morning, as the phrase goes, "come down with a run;"—their value was reduced to a mere nothing.

Mr. Thugg, the director, had gone in blissful unconsciousness to spend a couple of days at Ramsgate. — To condole with somebody was absolutely necessary.—Colonel Cooke was laid up with the gout, and as on that account the Colonel couldn't come to Mr. Broughton, so Mr. Broughton, Mahomet-like, went to the Colonel.

That gallant officer had but one specific for all ills, mental or bodily, — it was whisky-toddy with a slice of lemon in it. — “Mild, certain, and safe, it might,” he affirmed, “be taken by the most delicate female or tender infant, being equally efficacious for all constitutions, ages, or disorders.”

Mr. Broughton tried a tumbler ; — not experiencing that immediate relief which the Colonel had led him to expect, he took a second, — that had never been known to fail ; but possibly Mr. Broughton’s constitution, age, and disorder might have been different from those of the rest of the world, for, certain it is, that a severe headache was the only effect produced by the panacea.

It was in this state of double discomposure that the old gentleman encountered Frank in the above-mentioned situation, — his countenance flushed with excitement and the heat of the room he had just quitted ; his very attitude, even, was against him, and appeared indicative of a rakish desire to know “what the devil was to be done next ?” Then his coat, or rather his friend’s

coat,—one of those very pomps and vanities which he had so often derided,—there was hypocrisy in that.

Under these circumstances, it is not so much to be wondered at that Mr. Broughton on the day ensuing, slightly feverish from his mild doses of whisky-toddy with the slices of lemon-peel in it, should give orders to be denied as soon as he beheld Frank making for the door.

“Remember, Jenkins,” said he, “I am never at home when that young gentleman calls.”

“You seem astonished,” he continued, turning towards Clara and Major Faulkland, the former of whom was looking anxiously at her father for some explanation of this unwonted harshness. “You seem astonished; but, mark me, I deliberately forbid that young man my house in future.”

“Surely, my dear sir,” interposed the Major, “you will hear a few words ——”

“Not one, sir, in his defence!” exclaimed Mr. Broughton sharply. “You, Major Faulkland, have already done all that a friend could do towards extenuating his conduct, and more,

perhaps, than was strictly justifiable. You know how readily I have listened to your suggestions,—how I have clung to the hope that the son of my oldest, my best friend, might yet be reclaimed from his follies;—how wilfully blind I have been to his incivilities—his ingratitude to myself; but it is all over. I saw him last night emerging from the door of a low gaming house,—he never enters mine again. Heaven knows the pain it will cost me to tear that young man from my heart; but it must be done! Clara, my love,” and the old gentleman took the cold hands of his daughter within his own, “Clara, my love, we must forget him.”

Clara steadily met her father's gaze, and though a tear stole down his aged cheek, not one was visible on her own pale face as she replied,

“Mr. Sherborne, sir, has long ceased to hold any place in my regard. I would not wish,” she added, her eyes gradually descending, “to think ill of him; but he has, of his own free will, withdrawn himself from us, and it is better, perhaps, that he has done so.”

"Yes, yes, you are right; it is better as it is," said Mr. Broughton, "far better as it is." But here comes poor Thugg, — dear me, another disagreeable subject."

Mr. Thugg, in consideration of his recent misfortune, was received with a far greater show of attention from the family than usual. The old gentleman shook him kindly by both hands; Clara hastened to place a chair for him, and even Miss Magge begged permission to cut him some cold beef. He appeared but little affected by the extent of his losses, but sat himself down with great resignation, and a very excellent appetite to luncheon.

"Astonishing how peckish those sea-breezes make one," he remarked. "I came up last night, and have been eating ever since."

"Well," asked Mr. Broughton, after admiring the unconcern with which the speculator proceeded in his meal, — "Do you mean to sell?"

"Sell!" repeated Mr. Thugg, endeavouring to harpoon a pickled walnut with a blunt fork; "Sell what?"

A suspicion flashed across Mr. Broughton that his companion might not yet have heard of the failure of his darling project: advancing to the table he said, in a kind tone, "My dear Thugg, pardon my abruptness, but I supposed that you knew all."

"Knew what?" asked Mr. Thugg.

"It is useless to disguise it," continued his friend; "but the Bill is thrown out, and the Pan-edu-taphic stock is barely worth a fraction."

"No; you don't say so!—A trifle more beef," replied the philosophical director.

"But I do say so!" exclaimed the old gentleman, in an agony of astonishment, "and if you'll just be good enough to look at *The Times*.—*The Times* says so—everybody says so—"

"You surprise me," observed the inexplicable Thugg, with his mouth full of cold meat, but exhibiting little external symptoms of the surprise in question.

"Why—what the devil—Thugg, are you awake?" roared his bewildered friend, seizing

him by the shoulder, and administering a shake so sudden and hearty, that, had he actually been in a state of repose, would probably have awakened him into a fit of apoplexy; as it was, it merely produced a violent one of coughing, and deluged his trousers with the contents of a tumbler of Burton ale.

“Are you awake now?” cried Mr. Broughton, pursuing his triumph; “the Pan-edu-taphic is smashed, I tell you, and your 3000*l.* along with it.”

“Water! water!” gasped the half-choked Mr. Thugg, with swimming eyes, and a very heightened complexion. “My dear Broughton, you are so infernally precipitate. Why couldn’t you say the Pan-edu-taphic at first? The fact is, I sold out three days ago. Rather lucky, as things have turned out, wasn’t it?” And Mr. Thugg, filling himself a glass of Madeira, closed one eye that the other might bear with undivided focus upon the wine;—then opened it again—nodded to the ladies,—and emptied his glass with the deliberate gravity of a Stoic.

Mr. Broughton checked an inclination to

whistle, and walked up and down the room, twisting his watch-chain round his fore-finger with great velocity.

No sooner had the ex-director taken his departure, than one and all began to put forth hints by no means favourable to that gentleman's sense of honour in the transaction just discussed. "He has been imposing upon me, that's quite clear," remarked the old gentleman.

"A cunning old fox," ejaculated Miss Magge: "he is as bad as that odious Jobson, the mechanical sweep, who ran away with all our collection for the poor little oppressed climbing-boys."

"I wish he had run away with the collectors," muttered Mr. Broughton.

"No you don't," said the lady; "and if you do, you ought to be ashamed of yourself—so you ought! Ah me! what will the world come to?"

"Go to, you mean—" interrupted the excited old gentleman: "it will go to the devil, ma'am!—the Pan-edu-taphic is gone to the devil!—Frank will go to the devil!—everything and

everybody will go to the devil !—and old Thugg, he 'll be sure to go to the devil,—that's one consolation !”

Miss Magge seemed to think it was ; but further colloquy was prevented by a deputation of Smithson Smiths coming up to inflict a morning call.

The Major had said nothing during this little discussion, but sped his way with most entire satisfaction at the turn affairs had lately taken with respect to Frank. He had never anticipated much difficulty in detaching him from the society of the Broughtons ; and the young gentleman seemed of his own free will to have relieved him from all anxiety whatever upon the point.

Returning home from Russell Square one evening early, he entered his own sitting-room with an air of undisguised triumph in which he seldom indulged. Finding Mr. Coryton there, who had already taken possession of a box of cigars and three chairs to smoke them in, he saluted that worthy with a slap on his back, and congratulated him on his want of ceremony.

Mr. Coryton, making divers contortions, proceeded to rub the afflicted shoulder with great vehemence, exclaiming the while, "Come, come, *jocus est jocus*: but, old fellow, 'thou smitest hard,' as the poet says," a few more expostulations in the same strain followed, albeit he experienced much inward delight at the unusual condescension of his patron, and looked earnestly for an opportunity of presuming upon it accordingly.

"And what has lured thee, mine ancient Robert, from the Patriarch's so early?" asked the Major.

"I wasn't exactly lured," replied the other.

"Kicked?" inquired Faulkland.

"No, Major Faulkland, nor kicked," returned Mr. Coryton, with great apparent scorn and indignation; "the boot is not in being that shall kick Bob Coryton. '*Nemo me impune lacessit*,' sir, that's my motto. No, sir, I was requested — requested, mind — to withdraw; so here you see me doing the *καταπραΐσις*, and, I flatter myself, doing him well." With these words Mr. Coryton "emitted" several successive vo-

lumes of tobacco-smoke from one corner of his mouth.

“ Well, well, it’s much the same,” said the Major, laughing ; “ but listen to me. The heiress is mine,—the old man is won,—and Clara Broughton has all but consented to become Mrs. Faulkland.”

“ All but — awful phrase !” remarked the cloud-compelling gentleman, gravely. “ I remember when I was at school——”

“ No reminiscences, for Heaven’s sake !” interrupted the Major ; “ let us think of the present, I may have work for you. Gradually, you know, have I been winning my way into the hearts of father and daughter, — slowly, but surely. To-day, when alone with the former, I commenced a more open attack. The old boy met me at once, — told me he longed to see his little Clara settled,—that he had designed her for one who had proved altogether unworthy of her, — and that now I had his best wishes for my success ; so saying, he shook my hand a great many times, and insisted upon our drinking another bottle of claret together.”

“ But the young woman ? ” said Mr. Coryton.

“ She is cared for,” continued the Major :
“ her consent will not be wanting : she would
wed with Beelzebub if her father wished it.”

“ She is likely to be indirectly connected with
that gentleman’s family,” muttered Mr. Bob ;—
“ but how have you disposed of Frank Sher-
borne all this while ? ”

“ Here,” replied Faulkland, “ here are a
couple of letters, one from the gentleman to my
bride elect, volunteering an explanation of his
conduct ; another from old Broughton, requesting
him to make one. The interception of these
two epistles ruins him for ever.” And the
Major, with an affected carelessness, tossed a
couple of papers over to his companion.

Mr. Coryton, twisting his cigar as close as pos-
sible to his right ear, turned his eyes in a contrary
direction, and proceeded to run over, half aloud,
the contents of the first.

“ ‘ Dearest Clara—painful change in feelings
—erroneous opinions—fatal mistake—readily ex-
plained—grant an interview, &c. &c.’—Ah,
exactly !—I see—misconstruction, misery, and

all that sort of thing,—‘ your devoted, Frank Sherborne.’

“ Yes, the old story,” said Mr. Coryton, laying down the letter and taking up its companion, which he perused with greater attention, commenting on the great good nature of the writer as he proceeded.

“ Jolly old cock !” he exclaimed, as he concluded,—“ a very jolly old cock indeed for an uncle or a father-in-law, or any very near relative ; — thinks of nothing but pardoning follies and making allowances. It’s lucky, Major, neither of these billets have reached its destination ; it would have cut up your hand to the smallest possible shivers.”

“ I have received all the passes,” returned the Major, quietly ; “ every letter goes through Mr. Jenkins the butler’s hands, and he and I are old acquaintances.”

“ What a highly respectable character Mr. Jenkins must be,” remarked the smoker ;—“ quite a ‘ real blessing ’ in a small family. But suppose now, after all, his uncommonly agreeable master and the devoted Francis should happen

to meet ;—a small barrel of oysters, and a couple of glasses of brandy and water discussed between them, and you are kicked out of the saddle at a moment's notice."

"I run my luck against that," replied the Major, gaily; "and once married, no power on earth can shake me: the entail is as tight as all the lawyers, with their Grand Master Old Nick himself to boot, could tie it."

"Pretty game, — very pretty game," said Mr. Coryton. "I have only one more question to put: — What do you suppose brought Sherborne to 'The Nick' that night?"

"Play, I suppose," replied Faulkland; "that is, I believe, the usual object for which gaming-houses are visited. You don't suppose I have ever been deceived by his affectation of sobriety?"

"He didn't play," returned Mr. Coryton, shortly.—"He looked at me."

"He might, perhaps, have gone there from curiosity — that strange desire which most very young gentlemen have of seeing a 'Hell,'" said the Major: "but I neither know nor care for

his motive—it is sufficient for me that there he was, and there he was recognised.”

“Then you have no idea of his object?” asked Coryton.

“None,” was the reply.

“I have,” said Mr. Coryton, emitting about two words and one puff of smoke in every breath, a system of elocution rendered necessary by his desperate efforts to rescue his cigar from premature extinction;—“I have a very full-flavoured idea:—the lady,—his new acquaintance, who was traced home that same night—found out all about her, and her name is—” Mr. Coryton’s endeavours were vain; his cigar obstinately gave up the smoke; and as its wonted fires wouldn’t live in the ashes, he deliberately knocked them off, and proceeded to re-light with great care at a wax taper; all which being done to his satisfaction, he bethought him of his unfinished sentence:—“Her name is Montague—Mrs. Montague.”

The Major started. A flush passed over his olive brow, and his lip quivered as he asked,

“ Mrs. Montague ! — *The* Mrs. Montague ! —
can it be — is it — Julia ? ”

“ The very same,” said Mr. Coryton, and he
tossed the refractory cigar into the grate.

CHAPTER V.

Cœlum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.

HORACE.

Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee !

GOLDSMITH.

A blow !—shall Bombardinian take a blow ?

Chrononhotonthologos.

SALT WATER NO CURE FOR LOVE.—THERE AND BACK AGAIN.

—A SICK FRIEND AND A SULLEN FOE.—IDENTIFICATION.

—WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT ?—DOCUMENTS IN DANGER.—JUST IN TIME.

MAJOR FAULKLAND had been guilty of no exaggeration in his statement of the chances in his favour. His cause was, indeed, “progressing,” as brother Jonathan has it, excellently well ; the prize was, as he had said, all but within his grasp : everything, indeed, had conspired to

prosper his undertaking ; even Sherborne, from whose presence alone danger was to be dreaded, had left London.

Stung with the supposed unkindness of Clara in not deigning so much as to answer his letter, he determined to divert his thoughts, if possible, by change of scene ; and as Brighton had formerly been one of Captain Montague's places of residence, he proceeded thither with a vague hope of acquiring some information touching that gentleman's present abode.

Pursuant to certain strongly expressed, and very valorous, resolutions of banishing Miss Broughton for ever from his memory, he plunged, as far as he was able, into the gaieties of the marine metropolis, but all would not do ; and he returned at night to his cheerless chamber, only the more miserable for such forced and unnatural mirth. He then tried solitary walks and sea-bathing, but did not find them very effective medicines for " a mind diseased."

He had just arrived at the conclusion, that Brighton was without exception the dullest place in Europe, and that he was unquestionably the

dullest personage in Brighton, — when a melancholy letter from Julia informed him that her illness had assumed a form more immediately dangerous, and that she had been unable to leave the house for some days.

Frank needed no further summons, but turning his few personals into a carpet-bag, seated himself on the top of the “Neck or Nothing” new fast coach, and arrived in town that afternoon, with the usual number of arms and legs, — the spirited proprietor fortunately omitting, on that particular occasion, to overturn the vehicle on the road.

On inquiring for Mrs. Montague, he was informed that a gentleman had been with her for some time, and had not yet taken his leave. Notwithstanding this intelligence Frank walked quietly up stairs, and long ere he gained the top, loud and angry tones, mingled with sobs, and what he judged to be weeping, were audible, as proceeding from the apartment occupied by the unhappy Julia.

He strode hastily forward and opened the door abruptly.

The lady, paler and thinner than ever, was sitting propped up by pillows in a large arm-chair. She was gazing with imploring looks and streaming eyes on a man who stood fronting her, and with his back to the entrance: he turned at the sound of the opening door, and disclosed to the view of the astonished Frank the person of Major Faulkland!

"'Tis he, by Heaven!" exclaimed Frank, perfectly bewildered at the presence of his friend, — "'tis Faulkland!"

The Major smiled, while Julia, looking confusedly from one to the other, cried, — "Faulkland! — Faulkland! — no, no, his name is Montague, Henry Montague; — Frank, this is my husband!"

Sherborne started as if he had trodden upon an adder.

"Bridle your astonishment, my dear Frank," said the Major, with the greatest composure. "You are not aware, perhaps, that in little affairs of gallantry a *nom de guerre* is sometimes indispensable: I usually select that of Montague where euphony becomes an object.

By what appellation shall I address my sober young friend who enters ladies' private apartments with so little ceremony?"

Frank was still so overcome by his surprise, as to be unable to frame any reply to the Major's sneer. The latter, therefore, turning towards Julia, said,—“ You, madam, can doubtless explain this gentleman's appearance.”

“ That lady, sir, is my near relative,” said Sherborne, at length recovering himself, and advancing.

“ I claim a rather near connection with her, myself,” replied the Major.

“ You then admit the fact which she has just so solemnly asserted?” interposed Frank, with an eagerness which he did not attempt to conceal,—“ You acknowledge her to be your wife?”

“ No, no,” returned the Major, with a quiet smile, “ I am not exactly prepared to go that length: but, nevertheless, a very intimate acquaintance has undoubtedly existed between us. Indeed, it is with a particular reference to that point that I am a visiter on the present occasion, and, I fear, so inopportune a one. My

business, however, may be settled in five minutes, and then I will no longer interrupt your *tête-à-tête*.

"Villain!" muttered Frank, in a low deep tone.

Faulkland caught the expression,—his lip curled, but he replied not; and addressing his miserable wife, asked sternly, "Do you, or do you not, madam, accede to my terms?"

"Be merciful, dearest Henry, and press me no further," she replied, looking piteously in his face; "I have said I cannot—must not."

"Then starve!" cried Faulkland, in a voice hoarse with suppressed passion; "starve together,—you and your base-born brat!"

"Hold!" interrupted Frank, as Julia burst into a renewed flood of tears at the brutality of this coarse invective; "this lady, Major Faulkland, is at present under my protection. Spare me your sneers, sir; as her nearest acknowledged relation, I will not permit such language to be addressed to her in my presence."

"The lady is happy in possessing so redoubted a champion," replied the Major with a

supercilious bow, "and as he is one who appears to possess so much influence with her, suffer me to crave his interest in inducing her to effect an arrangement which must materially tend to establish her future comfort and independence."

"Proceed, sir," said Frank; and the Major very collectedly, taking a most minute pinch of snuff, continued,

"This lady has, you must know then, in her possession some papers of no intrinsic value; but among them are records of certain mummeries enacted by her and myself some few years ago, and letters containing certain conventional vows and protestations of endless love, &c. in consideration of her giving up to me which useless trumpery, together with a written renouncement of all claim to be considered my wife, and a promise to make no further demands upon my purse or notice, I pledge myself to settle 200*l.* a year upon her during her life, the half of which shall be continued to her son from the period of her decease."

"That is to say," replied Sherborne, "you wish Mrs. Faulkland, in consideration of the

sum proposed, to barter her good fame, and to fix a stigma upon her child, by delivering up every proof of her unhappy marriage with yourself, and of his legitimacy."

"I beg your pardon,—connection, not marriage," interposed Faulkland. "Your ready wit will at once apprehend, that an unmeaning and illegal ceremony, performed by a popish priest, cannot be dignified with the title of marriage."

"Oh Frank ! tell me—in mercy tell me, it is not so,—tell me that I am his lawful wife !" cried the agonized Julia, seizing her cousin's hand.—
"Speak to me, Frank ; I know it is false,—we were married by the rites of holy church—we are joined together before God and man."

"I fear, if his assertion be correct," replied Sherborne, gazing sorrowfully on the poor girl, "that you are joined together by no tie which our laws will recognize ; the plan has been devised by one too deeply versed in treachery."

The Major again bowed tauntingly ; and his victim, gazing wildly at him for an instant, burst into a fit of hysterical weeping.

"Now with respect to the matter we were

discussing?" said the former, who retained his self-possession with admirable success.

"Major Faulkland," interrupted Frank, "let us understand one another. The papers you allude to, which can and shall furnish to the world damning proofs of your villany, shall be bartered for no promises, however specious, and no sum, however large."

Julia started from her chair with sudden energy,—“Take them, take them!” she cried, thrusting into Sherborne’s hand a packet which she had hastily withdrawn from beneath her pillow.

The Major sprang forward at the instant to snatch them from her grasp; but, unprepared for the resistance he encountered, though by far the more powerful man of the two, he was hurled back to the door by Sherborne; here he planted himself, foaming with rage and disappointment, and, drawing from his cane a short but formidable rapier, exclaimed fiercely, — “Give up those papers, sir, or by h—l you quit not this apartment alive!”

Frank pointed to the fainting sufferer. “Is

this a place," said he calmly, "or that a witness for scenes of violence?"

"I seek no quarrel," returned the Major, lowering his point, and evidently annoyed at having so far committed himself. "Those documents belong to me, and, in appropriating them to yourself, you are as guilty as the villain who robs me of my purse; restore them and go in peace, or stay in peace if you prefer it,—you shall be relieved from any restraint my presence may impose, immediately."

"The trust now confided to me I shall hold as best I may, nor shall I scruple to avail myself of the aid a single summons would draw around me." So saying, Frank with a rapid motion threw up one of the window-sashes.

The Major stood for a moment irresolute, then, compressing his bloodless lips, deliberately returned the weapon to its resting-place.

"You finally reject my proposals?" he said. — Sherborne bowed. — "Farewell then, sir, for the present, I shall have another to make which may prove more acceptable;" and Faulkland,

with such a smile as a baffled demon may be supposed to put on, left the apartment.

His departure was the signal for renewed lamentations on the part of his unhappy wife, her distress now aggravated by the apprehension of having involved the only individual in the world whom she could consider as her friend in a personal quarrel, and perhaps of having endangered his life on her account. Frank did all he could to soothe and re-assure her, pledged himself to take immediate steps towards ascertaining the best mode of redressing her wrongs; and having at length in some degree succeeded in calming her emotions, took his leave.

Frank had scarcely located himself in his old chambers, and consigned the contested treasure to a place of safety when a card was delivered to him, together with an intimation that its owner would be glad to see Mr. Sherborne on urgent business.

“Admit his Lordship by all means,” said Frank, not exactly divining what urgent business the Lord Adolphus Cannonbury could by any possibility have with so humble an individual as himself.

In a few minutes a tall, handsome-looking personage, with a highly aristocratic and somewhat military air, was ushered into his sitting-room. He bowed in a graceful but rather distant manner on entering, and as soon as the servant who admitted him had withdrawn, (which having placed a chair, dusted the hearth, and hunted about for something not to be found, he at length did,) observed, that "he had called on behalf of his friend Major Faulkland,—that the nature of the case rendered all discussion unnecessary, and that he should feel obliged by being referred to some gentleman with whose assistance the affair might be brought to an immediate conclusion.

"You must be aware that in cases like this," added his Lordship, "where a blow has passed, it is of importance that no time be lost."

"Are you aware, Lord Adolphus," asked Frank, "of the circumstances under which that blow was given?"

"Perfectly," was the rejoinder. "But as you admit that it *was* given, I apprehend, as a man of honour you have but one course to pursue."

"Be it so," said Frank. "Major Fædtkland shall have the satisfaction he demands,—my friend shall wait on your Lordship without delay and at any place you may appoint."

"Will the Guards' Club-house be inconvenient?" asked Lord Adolphus.

"You shall hear from me there within a few hours," returned Frank: upon which Lord Adolphus Canonbury rose, and making another remarkably polite bow took his leave.

No sooner had his visitor departed, than Sherborne sat himself down to consider which of all his friends and acquaintances was the one best qualified to see him shot with propriety, and according to the nicest rules and etiquette of polite society. George Hazeldine at length occurred to him as one in every respect fitting for this delicate and friendly office, and he accordingly bent his steps forthwith to that gentleman's chambers. Mr. Hazeldine was delighted with the task,—that is, as far as a person of such refined fashion could be delighted by anything. — and having been made acquainted with the particulars, proceeded with an air of

unusual cheerfulness to settle the preliminaries with Lord Adolphus.

Frank meanwhile paced up and down his friend's apartment, deeming the hour during which he was absent an age. It was the first scrape of the kind in which he had ever been involved; and although of personal fear he had none, yet, as neither his ear nor his feelings had as yet become in any way Irish, he could not forbear exhibiting something of restlessness and impatience, and rather longed for the morrow.

"Is everything settled?" he inquired, as Mr. George Hazeldine, after the lapse of time alluded to, re-entered the apartment.

"Most satisfactorily," replied the latter. "No letter-writing, no explanation, no 'if you did so, then I did so' — no infernal nonsense of that sort; everything perfectly clear: — we meet in the morning at six, by the back of Chalk Farm; where, as Lord Adolphus very properly remarked, 'your principal wings my principal, or my principal wings your principal, as the case may be,—*voilà tout*.'"

"Very satisfactory indeed," said Frank.

“ Oh, very much so,” returned Mr. Hazeldine : “ it is really quite delightful to meet such a perfect man of business as Cannonbury. Now, with respect to pistols : — yes — yes,” he continued, after a short internal struggle, in which friendship and generosity gained a very important victory, “ you shall have them, Frank, you *shall* have — my pops.”

Sherborne expressed himself highly gratified at the offer ; though, perhaps, without entirely appreciating the effort of self-devotion which prompted it, and cast rather an unconcerned glance at the weapons which his friend now produced from the recesses of a cabinet in which they had been deposited with as much care as any sainted relics in its protecting shrine, and which, for the nicety of their workmanship and accuracy of poize, certainly merited a warmer approval.

“ Adieu, then, for the present,” said Sherborne, replacing Mr. Nock’s *chef-d’œuvre* in its elegant case. “ I have, as you may well suppose, some few preparations to make for our business of to-morrow. Where shall we meet ? ”

"I'll pick you up at a quarter past five;—remember, sharp on the quarter," replied Hazeldine; "it is a good half-hour's drive to the ground, and you'll need a stroll to bring the blood into circulation."

It is a queerish piece of business that same going to bed, when a man does it with a no very vague perception, that the next time he seeks what the poet terms "horizontal repose," it may be on a hard, cold meadow, and amidst damp grass, instead of on a good, warm, comfortable feather-bed between well-aired sheets, with the sky for a coverlet in lieu of a quilt, and a bullet occupying the place so much more agreeably filled with a cold chicken and lobster salad.

"To die! — to sleep no more!"

The thought is an anticipation most anti-narcotic in its effect, and it is much to be questioned whether, if we could take a quiet peep into their respective chambers, we might not see the boldest and bravest of our modern "fire-eaters" on such occasions sitting, for a few moments at least,

"Upon their heads, antipodes in bed,"

and before committing themselves to that pillow

which they are about, perhaps, to press for the last time, ruminating on the chances of the very unpleasant change of condition which the morning's dawn may happen to bring about. To be so suddenly summoned

“ To go we know not where—
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod !—”

is an idea which may well startle the person best prepared for the journey, and the least averse to this particular kind of shampooing.

Frank, as we have said, was no coward, yet did some very natural repugnance to the errand he was going upon at his rising banish

“ Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep,”

from his eyelids much longer than was the Goddess's wont to be absent from them. She came at length, however, but in a very coy and coquettish mood, and, after a very brief dispensation of her favours, took her leave abruptly as if scared by the interruption of an old rickety clock as it struck three in the passage adjoining Sherborne's sleeping-apartment.

He had been dreaming meanwhile ; and among

the wild and confused ideas that had floated through his brain, one — that he had failed in his appointment — was constantly recurring.

This annoying impression took every fantastic shape that fancy could devise, and seemed to realise every possible chance that could lead to his dishonour ; — at one time Hazeldine had forgotten him, — then he had gone up with old Broughton in a balloon and couldn't get down again in time ; — then his boots could not be found, and his linen had all been sent to the wash ; — lastly, he had overslept himself, and he listened with a palpitating heart lest the neighbouring clocks should confirm the impression ; the continued darkness, however, and the said clocks, which kept up an irregular fire for about the space of ten minutes, convinced him at last that he had time, and to spare.

Feeling, however, unwilling to trust himself to sleep again, he lay with his eyes fixed on the window, in expectation of the approach of dawn. Silence—it seemed a strange and unnatural one —reigned for the most part over the vast city,

and he felt it a positive relief when the distant rumble of some far-journeying waggon fell upon his ear, or as he heard the gingle of some old hackney-coach bearing to his home the drunken and debauched rioter of the preceding night ;—then he thought of the scenes of gaiety and dissipation enacting at that moment all around him. A light in a distant window caught his eye—a figure passed between it and the blind :—was it that of some late reveller staggering to his rest, or the worn and anxious attendant on some bed of sickness ?—Again his thoughts wandered to his home—his father—and again he trod the sunny hills of Kent with Julia and his beloved Clara. A dark unvaried picture had hung before him for weeks—for months ;—and now for one brief—one last moment it might be, the views of happier days rushed fresh and vivid on his mind.

As morning broke, he rose from his uneasy couch, and having occupied as much time as possible in dressing, stepped into his sitting-room. Gently removing the shutters he admitted the grey and cheerless light, previously

in part visible through many a chink and cranny. He found everything as he had left it on the previous evening; the table still strewed with writing-materials,—the untasted supper, the extinguished lamp,—all remained in the same position.

The present order, or rather disorder, of the room annoyed him; but a few hours had in fact elapsed since he had quitted it; yet that time seemed to belong to a period long gone by — yet 'twas of yesterday.

He wiled away a few minutes in replacing the disturbed portions of the furniture; next he secured the letters which he had addressed to Clara, Julia, his father, and Mr. Broughton; and then, having scribbled a few lines containing some directions to his servant, sat down and anxiously awaited the appearance of his friend.

Hazeldine was punctual to a second; and on the sound of his arrival Frank proceeded to the stairs; of course every step was attended with double the creaking that had ever been heard before. The cat rushed by him, upsetting in her flight a pair of boots and his umbrella;

then a dust-pan was dislodged, and sent clattering after them ; lastly, the bolt proved refractory ; it grated and squeaked till all his teeth were set on edge ; the chain rattled, and the key fell.

At length every obstacle was overcome, and Sherborne gained the open air, where he found his friend awaiting him in a cabriolet, on the unoccupied seat of which reposed the well-known elegant repository of Mr. Nock's no less elegant "Barking Irons."

He stepped into the carriage with a foot far lighter than the heart that gave it motion, and in another moment was on his way to the place of appointment.

"Head cool—hand steady—eh?" asked Hazeldine as he drove off, clearly showing at the same time that he himself possessed neither of those advantages.

"Never more so," replied Frank ; "but you, my dear George, appear dreadfully shaky."

"These late hours don't agree with my constitution," observed the latter, very seriously. "I am a regular man, and always like to be in bed by four o'clock at latest,—this sort of

thing is positively turning night into day."— It was certainly very like it.—“A brisk walk, however,” continued he, “across the fields will shake off the morning chill, and bring me round again.”

After a short pause Sherborne resumed the conversation.

“George,” said he, “should the issue of this meeting prove fatal,—should I fall, may I rely upon you for immediately delivering these letters in the proper quarter? I have in them completely unfolded the villany of the *soi-disant* Captain Montague, and taken effectual measures for the future protection of his victim.”

Hazeldine nodded. — “Don’t talk,” he replied, “of falling, you can’t possibly miss your man with those tools;—on the honour of a gentleman, I can nib a pen with them at twelve paces.”

“I have no desire to take his life,” said Frank.

“No!—why it is your only excuse for going out,” returned Hazeldine; “and, between you and me, you ought not to be here: had not

the proposal been already accepted by yourself I never would have permitted you to give such a rascal satisfaction ; as it is, you can only hope to make your peace with society by putting him fairly out of it."

They had by this time made some way along the Hampstead Road, and gained what were then outskirts of London ; melancholy rows of unfinished houses, falling like so many young gentlemen of spirit into a premature decay, had been passed ; "Pleasant Places" in embryo, "Prospect Terraces" of succeeding time were left behind : the Hercynian grove, consisting of nearly a dozen shrubs of the size of gooseberry-bushes and colour of birch brooms, and extending in two rows far to the right, was gained. On they drove rapidly by the last Mount of Paradise, which, from its peculiar strata of geological construction, gave rise to an opinion rife in the neighbourhood that our first parents were formed out of cinders and broken bottles, — till fields, no longer brick-fields but real grass-green fields, the long herbage glittering and drooping with the morning dew, were on either side, But a

few years have elapsed, and yet at that unenlightened time no railroad smoked along the valley; such things, indeed, were darkly hinted at by wild and enthusiastic projectors, but were naturally considered in general as wicked and impracticable.—Grimstone Villas, Carolina Granges, Pigstye Pories, &c. were but vaguely contemplated, and with respect to the tread of the New Police, fair Primrose height was as yet a Jungfrau.

Arrived at the corner of the lane which, at the time we are speaking of, turned off from the high road and led to the place of their destination, the pair descended from their cabriolet, which was committed to the charge of Hazel-dine's "tiger,"—the animal was in use, though this particular species was not yet included in our Zoological nomenclature—and so placed as to be least exposed to the notice of any early wayfarer. This precaution taken, they proceeded on foot to the place of action.

Skirting the hill just mentioned, and turning their back upon the public-house known as Chalk Farm, the friends stepped hastily across the pas-

ture, and, surmounting a gate, made their way diagonally across a large irregularly-shaped field to one, on the southern side of the hill, of smaller dimensions and more retired aspect ; here, although somewhat before the time appointed, they found the Major and Lord Cannonbury already awaiting their arrival, together with a grave-looking gentleman in a very tight white neckcloth, who had been requested to take his walk before breakfast in that direction.

There was an air of coolness and even of gaiety about Faulkland which aroused every spark of indignation in Sherborne's bosom ; and scarcely acknowledging the polite bow with which that gentleman honoured him, he waited impatiently for the decisive moment.

A short conference took place between the seconds, and the ground was measured.

"I believe, my Lord," said Hazeldine, "nothing remains but to present the weapons,—will you give the word?"

"As you please, sir," rejoined Lord Adolphus ; and the exact form was explained to the combatants.

"Raise your arm steadily and pull when you cover his knee," said Hazeldine, in a low tone, as he delivered the pistol to his principal.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" asked Lord Adolphus, in a distinct tone,—no answer was returned in words, but the combatants were evidently *en guard*,—he paused but a single second,—"*Fire!*"

A loud report,—it appeared but one,—followed instantaneously. The pistol dropped from Sherborne's hand, he staggered and fell heavily on the sward.

CHAPTER VI.

When Greeks join'd Greeks, then was the tug of war.

LEE.

A CONSULTATION.—AN INTERVIEW.—MORE FREE THAN
WELCOME.—DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

SHERBORNE had fallen shot through the body; the wound, however, though a serious one, was, after such a hurried examination as the surgeon could give to it on the ground, not judged to be mortal, and his adversary, highly gratified with the termination of the encounter, returned hastily to London.

His rival was for the time disabled, but he was in possession of his secret; and that once divulged, all chance of gaining Clara and her fortune would be lost to him for ever. Still, however, he was out of the way for a time, and

as there was need of most prompt measures, the Major set himself to work with unusual energy. Everything proceeded in exact accordance with his wishes. Clara, after a long and painful struggle, yielded to the continued solicitations of her lover and her father.—The day was fixed.

The Major was sitting in close divan with his faithful ally, Mr. Bob Coryton, discussing his success and listening to the high encomiums passed on his tact by the disinterested Robert, when his old acquaintance Mr. Isaaks was unexpectedly announced to him.

This worthy personage, availing himself of the familiarity conventionally allowed to those of his profession, coolly followed his card into the apartment, where he seated himself with many protestations of being the Major's very humble and obedient servant.

Mr. Coryton looked especially perplexed at the visitor, and from certain glances which he threw towards an opposite door, appeared to be calculating the advantages of making a precipitate retreat; somewhat re-assured, however, by the

courteous and affable manner exhibited by the Jew, he was content with holding himself in readiness for a start should circumstances render such a step advisable.

Mr. Issaks, perceiving his uneasiness, endeavoured at once to relieve him, and expressed his sorrow in the warmest terms at not having seen him lately at "The Nick." "We have had some excellent sport there lately," he continued; "your friend, Lord Adolphus, has dipped a little too deep. I was in hopes I should have had the pleasure of his company for a few days at my little cottage; but his uncle, or his aunt, or grandmother could not spare his society, and, as it seems, stumped up in consequence."

"D—n his grandmother!" muttered Mr. Coryton, with the most unaffected sincerity.

"With pleasure," returned the accommodating bailiff.

"When you have satisfactorily disposed of his lordship and his relations," interposed Faulkland, "be kind enough to inform me of your present business. I know your multiplied avo-

cations permit no time for calls of mere ceremony."

"Why, Major, as you observe, my hands are pretty full," replied Mr. Isaaks; "but I thought I'd just look in, as I had some business up in this part of the world. General Wiggin—you must remember the general?—short, stout, red-faced gentleman—complete smash all over. Uncommon unreasonable, too, he was; quite frightful, sir, to hear him swear when I troubled him to step out of his cab—awful, sir!—S' help me, if it wasn't the most alarming language I ever heard!"

"You were shocked, I dare say," returned Faulkland. "But I suppose you have some other communication to make?—you need not mind Coryton."

"Oh, no ceremony with me; d—n it, I'll be off!" exclaimed that accommodating gentleman, making a corresponding movement; in which, however, he was stayed by Faulkland, and again with some reluctance took his seat.

The Jew smiled, but very slightly; just enough, perhaps, for one versed in human nature to have detected the exquisite relish with which he was watching the agony of his old acquaintance.

"Yes—oh yes—as I was saying," he continued, "I have a little matter of business—a mere trifle, hardly worth troubling you about, but—oh, here it is;" and he extracted from a large dingy pocket-book a slip of paper. 'Copy of writ—suit of Messrs. Coates, P. Coates, and W. J. Coates, Tailors, Bond Street,—one hundred and thirteen pounds.'—Know them, I suppose?"

"The double-faced rascals!" exclaimed the Major; "they pledged themselves to postpone their claims till after my marriage."

"*Varium et mutabile semper Tailor!*"

remarked Mr. Coryton.

"I believe," pursued the Jew, looking keenly at Faulkland, "that they changed their arrangements from a report that you intended spending the honeymoon at Paris. They imagined it was not impossible but that in the hurry of departure

you might forget so insignificant an item as their little account."

"This infernal thing must be staved off by some means," said Faulkland, after a pause. "I have not a hundred guineas to throw away at a moment like this."

"Of course not," replied Mr. Isaaks, "you cannot be expected to have leisure to attend to such trifles at present; leave it all to me; the per-centage will be a mere nothing. The marriage, I believe, takes place on Tuesday week?"

The Major nodded.

"On the Monday, you remember, we have divers little accounts to make up, which must be completed before the ceremony can take place; we will throw this in with the rest. One o'clock is the hour appointed; it will be awkward if *our* appointment should slip your memory."

"At one I will hold myself engaged to you," replied the Major; "all will be then in readiness."

"Very good," observed Mr. Isaaks, helping

himself from a jug of claret on the table. "Health, gentlemen!—By the way, I think I had a something for Mr. Coryton;"—and he proceeded to run rapidly through the papers in his suspicious-looking pocket-book.

"Don't trouble yourself, I beg," exclaimed the gentleman referred to, in evident trepidation. "It is getting late, and I have promised to join a friend; any other time will do when you may happen to be passing."

"I don't know that it is of immediate consequence," returned the obsequious Mr. Isaaks, who, not, as it would appear, finding the article he was in search of so readily as he expected, at length closed his book and commenced making his preparations to depart. "I dare say I shall find you disengaged before long. Meanwhile, as Mr. Coryton justly remarks, it *is* getting late; so, perhaps, gentlemen, you will do me the favour to excuse me."

"Oh, by all means; don't mention it," exclaimed Mr. Coryton, rising and ringing the bell with corresponding politeness.

The Jew smiled, made sundry low bows, more remarkable for their obsequiousness than their elegance, and retired.

As soon as he was relieved from the presence of his disagreeable visiter, the Major paced the room thoughtfully for some time.

"Pray, Major, what did that character mean by making up accounts on the Monday?" asked Mr. Coryton. "Will such an arrangement suit your book?"

The Major gave no answer, but continued his walk.

"Lively and pleasant!" muttered his friend. "Come!" he at length added in a louder tone, "what new devilry are you concocting, Major? If it's a cross to bite the Jew, let's have it; and if Bob Coryton can lend a hand"—

"This settling, as you rightly divine, does not altogether suit my book," interrupted the Major; "it must be avoided at all risks; and there is but one way."

"Well, as I said, if Bob Coryton can"—

"The marriage must be hastened," continued

Faulkland, taking no notice of his friend's generous devotion. "Do you keep the report alive that Tuesday is the day ; the change shall be my care."

"You'll never get the young woman up to the post before time," said Coryton ; "she will talk to you about nightcaps, and vow that the bows can't be put in by the utmost exertion of milliner's power before Tuesday morning."

"She will not trifle with me," replied the Major, quietly. "The thing must be done. Take a pen and paper."

Coryton obeyed ; and having been very nice in his selection of both of the articles, looked to the Major for further instructions. The latter paused in his walk, and after a moment's reflection began to dictate the following epistle :—

"MON CHER FAULKLAND,

"Business of a most important nature requires my presence in the North early next week, and I cannot possibly postpone my journey later than Monday. Much as it will grieve me to be

absent from your union with the fair Clara, I must submit to the privation as best I may; unless, indeed,—which I can scarcely venture to hope,—the lady could be prevailed upon to fix an earlier day, in which case nothing should prevent my witnessing the happiness of the oldest and best friend,

“Of thine irrevocably,

“ADOLPHUS CANNONBURY.”

“That is sufficient,” said the Major, on reading the paper. “The old boy has set his heart upon having a real lord present at the wedding;—so date it from Cowes, seal it, and address to me.”

Previous to complying, Mr. Coryton proceeded to suggest sundry alterations upon the now established principle, that such are necessarily improvements. “Suppose,” said he, for instance, “you put in a little Latin,—two or three words,—instead of the French; it looks more natural and classical, and—”

“Seal!” said the Major sharply.

“ Ah ! well, just as you please,” replied Mr. Coryton, with a slight start ; “ you will be blown, that ’s all — you are safe for that.”

“ Not before my point is carried,” replied the Major, and the conversation dropped.

CHAPTER VII.

Speed, Malise, speed !—the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied —
Speed, Malise, speed ! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced !

SCOTT.

All 's done ! all 's won !

SHAKESPEARE.

A LONG STORY.—A SHORT ONE.—A RACE AGAINST TIME.—
THE GAME !!

IT was a bright clear morning in spring-time ; the breeze was sweet and soft, as, for the first time for many days, Frank Sherborne stepped forth into open air. He was still so weak from the effects of the wound he had received, in the duel which had proved so unfortunate in its result, as to be unable to walk without support, and he leaned heavily on the arm of Hazeldine

while together they were strolling among the sun-flowers and gooseberry-bushes of a rather extensive kitchen-garden.

“ Sit here,” said the latter, leading his friend to an arbour, either side of which was garnished with a very elaborate representation of a Grenadier on duty. The faces of these canvass individuals were as rosy as if they were in the constant habit of taking liberal toll from the many glasses of “ cold without ” despatched under their protection ; while behind the respective white breeches and black gaiters attached to the said convivial countenances, a couple of small cannons, very stout, very much confined for room, and pointing in opposite directions, made their appearance.

The pair were hardly ensconced in this truly rustic retreat, when a servant-girl, with her hand decently wrapped in a blue check apron, approached, and placed a card upon the table ; at the same time a gentleman was seen hobbling as fast as a slight touch of the gout would permit him, directly towards them.

"Colonel Coolie!" exclaimed Frank in astonishment.

"Yes," returned the Colonel, "I have hunted you out — tracked you like a red-Indian — found out from your old laundress that a dozen shirts had been sent to some farm in the Hampstead Road — made a good cast, and here I am. And now, what is the meaning of all this? — retiring from public life, cutting your best friends, and stopping to vegetate here like a prize cauliflower?"

Sherborne pointed, with a slight smile, to his bandaged side.

"Eh! what — winged?" cried the Colonel. "My dear boy, why didn't you apply to me? — the gout might have gone to the devil! I wouldn't have missed it if I had come upon crutches, and gone home in a hearse! But, come, come, let me have the whole history — who was your man?"

"I received my wound from the hand of Major Faulkland," replied Frank; "but the circumstances which led to our meeting involve rather a long story."

“ Tell it then,” exclaimed the Colonel, with some symptoms of agitation, “ and in as near the space of two minutes as possible.”

Mr. Hazeldine groaned, and Frank commenced his tale.

“ On the death of my late uncle, Mrs. Bouverie, his widow, entrusted her only child, a girl of eight years old, to the care of my father, and departed, from motives of economy, to reside with some near relations of her own at Boulogne. Meanwhile between the little Julia and myself, thus brought up together, a strong attachment arose. I loved her, — but as a sister, for even then my boyish affections were fixed upon our playmate, her whom —”

“ You may skip all that,” said the Colonel.

Sherborne smiled, and proceeded. “ Her mother, after an absence of some years, came back a zealous convert to the Church of Rome, and principally influenced, as I believe, in her return to England by the wish of removing Julia from the heretical roof of a Protestant clergyman. Parted from those whom kindness had endeared to her, and shut out from general society by

the gloomy fanaticism of Mrs. Bouverie, the unhappy girl easily fell a victim to the wiles of a *soi-disant* Captain Montague. An invalid marriage, for such I fear it will prove, was celebrated by the aid of her mother's Confessor, and the pair fled to France. Mrs. Bouverie survived the blow but a few months; and I, subsequently, met the forlorn Julia wandering about the streets of London in pursuit of the villain who had betrayed and deserted her.—That villain is Major Faulkland!"

The Colonel sprang from his chair as if it had contained a galvanic battery. "It is too late! — it is too late! — it is, by Heaven!" he exclaimed, dashing his stick through the yielding stomach of the canvass grenadier: — "Stay! — No! there is yet a single chance. Saddle, and ride—ride for your life, to town; — he — that rascal, Faulkland — marries Clara Broughton this blessed day!"

"To-day—married!" faltered Frank, looking wildly at the Colonel. He turned deadly pale, and sank back helpless upon the bench.

"Don't faint! — for Heaven's sake don't faint!"

—you really haven't time to faint!" cried Colonel Coolie, in accents of much alarm. "Rouse yourself, Frank — do something—stop it — eleven is the hour, — it hasn't struck yet, — it must—it shall be prevented!"

But ere these words were spoken, Hazeldine had already cleared the little table before him at a bound, and had disappeared within the house; and the Colonel had barely time to inform Sherborne that having been invited to the ceremony he had declined to attend from a strong personal dislike to the bridegroom, and had resolved instead to discover the retreat of his jilted friend, when George returned.

"My cab is ready!" cried he; "and if eleven be the hour, the game is not gone: we will have one stroke for it yet." So saying, he almost carried, rather than assisted, Sherborne to the vehicle:—the diminutive "tiger" flung himself on behind, and away like the wind flew Mr. George Hazeldine's cabriolet.

"Hollo!—stop,—the devil!—stop!—what's to become of me?" roared the Colonel; but he roared in vain.

"A coach will be up by one, sir," remarked the red-armed, red-faced servant girl; and "'sith 'twould no better be," the abandoned field-officer, after letting loose a volley of unheeded invectives, was fain to set himself down by the lacerated grenadier, and cool his heels and his impatience as best he might, till the arrival of the expected vehicle should give him a chance of rejoining his associates.

The morning selected for the nuptials of Clara Broughton and Major Faulkland, was, as we have already said, a bright and lovely one. The contented citizens of London suggested to each other as they met in their streets and dusky lanes, that "it must be a fine day in the country;" while those who possessed rural retreats in and about Turnham Green, and the like agricultural districts, replied, with a grave shake of the head, that the country would, of the two, rather prefer wet weather,—especially if the said retreats possessed six square feet of grass-plot.

At the Broughtons' meanwhile all was bustle and gaiety; servants, pastrycooks, and artificers of every description were running in and out

with as much earnestness as if the future welfare of the young couple was solely and entirely dependent upon the colour of a particular ribbon, or the preparation of some *recherché* dish. Many and various were the packages and boxes delivered and returned; but among them one of oblong shape directed to Mr. Broughton himself gave rise to no small speculations.

The housemaid, who had once lived with a dissenting minister, thought it looked like a sermon-box, and hinted that it might contain spiritual sustenance for the bride.

"It is more likely preserves," remarked the housekeeper, a little contemptuously.

"Or pickles," said the cook.

"Well, it must be something," declared Miss Broughton's own maid.

The footman did not see the necessity;—but he was addicted to reading Locke and Dialectics.

The lady's maid was right, — they always are, — it *was* something, and something which threw the whole household into ecstasies of wonderment, being no less than a bran new coat of an inexpressible colour, and a satin waistcoat of

an indescribable pattern, appavelled in which Mr. Broughton himself soon after descended triumphantly to the breakfast parlour. Mr. Jenkins's astonishment was of course the most natural and unbounded, because that individual alone had previously, for his own express satisfaction, examined the contents of the mysterious box in question. Miss Magge pronounced the general effect to be anything but sublime, and with unpardonable levity ran giggling up stairs, murmuring "What an old coxcomb!"

The ears of an old beau adorning himself for a wedding party are remarkably acute—"What a very ill-bred woman!" said Mr. Broughton, "and with no more taste than——" but the comparison could not be distinguished.

Everything was now arranged; the breakfast-table had been laid out, and relaid out, and laid out again under the immediate direction of the amiable spinster; nothing remained to be done, and everybody was engaged in doing it. The bridesmaids, young and happy, had assembled, — the gay laugh rang in the chambers, — every eye was bright — every face was smiling — every

face save one.—There was one pale brow, which should have flushed deepest with delight ;—one cold and heavy heart, which should have beat the warmest and lightest with love and hope.

Sad and inattentive to what was passing around her sat the bride, — in vain did they deck her with the choicest gems, — in vain did the sun shine brightly in the heavens,—it was a dull and a cheerless day to her. Once her eye flashed with a gleam of triumph—a wild thrill of joy shot through her heart—Frank might yet be true—her vows were yet unregistered—her hand was still her own.—A knock sounded at the door, and her father entered. The hour was come, and her future husband awaited her. The cold chill fell again with added heaviness upon her spirit—her dimmed eye filled with tears—she felt that it was too late !

Meanwhile, fast and furious was the pace at which Mr. George Hazeldine drove his friend towards town. Of all the accomplishments, and they were many, upon which that elegant young gentleman prided himself, driving he esteemed to be his *forte* ; nor did he so, as the present

occasion testified, without a cause. In and out did he dash—rounded corners—galloped down hills at full speed, without damaging so much as one single little boy, old woman, or any other “unconsidered trifle.” Mothers snatched their dirty urchins to their side as he passed, and boxed their little dirty ears for their not having been run over ; carters wondered, and hackney-coachmen felt nervous at his progress.

It wanted exactly four minutes to eleven as they turned into Tottenham-court Road : the clock had not struck the hour when they entered the square.

At Mr. Broughton’s door stood a handsome open carriage and four, to which four posters were attached ; the ‘ boys,’ as they are conventionably termed, having white rosettes in their hats and being well appointed for travelling.—A crowd of lads and other idlers was collected around ; — they separated and formed a lane, through which a lady was handed into the vehicle, — and Major Faulkland followed.

“ It is done, by all that ’s d—nable ! ” cried Hazeldine, as he reined up his panting beast :

it was too true!—The hour had been changed,
—Clara was a wedded wife!

“Clara—my own lost Clara!” exclaimed Frank, as he sprang from the vehicle and fell exhausted upon the pavement.

The postilions clapped spurs to their horses,—the Major rose up in the carriage,—he had caught sight of his baffled rival, and cried with exultation as they clattered off,

“THE GAME IS WON!”

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

BY DALTON INGOLDSBY.

GAME THE SECOND.

GAME THE SECOND.

THE INHERITANCE.

CHAPTER I.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculptures deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

GRAY.

A VICARAGE AND A VICAR OF THE OLDEN TIME.—A RETURN.—A RAMBLE.—A GRAVE SCENE.

SITUATE among the well-wooded hills that surround the city of Canterbury,—and but a few miles from its venerable towers,—stood, not many years ago, and stills stands,—*sed quantum mutatus*,—the pretty little vicarage of Meltham.

It was one of those delightfully picturesque and uncomfortable dwellings that are disappearing fast from the civilized world. The walls were of plaster, strengthened by large oaken beams placed cross-wise, called in the dialect of the county "a noggin," and supported a thick reed-thatched roof. From the latter peeped out little pigeon-hole windows, through which a few straggling rays of light found their way into the diminutive bedrooms. Air had ready access through a variety of channels. A low portal and a descending step admitted visitors or rain-water, or both, as the case might be, into a hall, large in proportion to the size of the building, which, by the way, was further furnished on the exterior with a plentiful and picturesque supply of ivy and earwigs. In front of this domicile extended a sloping lawn flanked on each side by rows of lofty elms which formed, as it were, a frame for the lovely picture of hill and dale, meadow and woodland, that stretched for miles beyond.

I make use of the past tense, for, as I have already hinted, the place has been greatly al-

tered and consequently improved of late. Under the superintendence of the present vicar, (a gentleman of consummate taste and learning,) the trees have been cut down for repairs, and the situation rendered all the drier thereby; while the present appearance of the house is that of a commodious, square-built, red brick mansion, adorned with a slated roof, French windows, bright green door, and a brilliant brass knocker to match.

It was on a very fine afternoon in May that a pleasant-looking, elderly personage, and somewhat corpulent withal, might have been seen pacing hurriedly the lawn just described. He was apparelled in garments that had once been black: what their colour now might be, it was difficult perhaps to determine. His hat, too, at some distant period a very reverend and becoming "shovel," had long lost every trace of its original shape: his shirt-frill and neckcloth, albeit in themselves of snowy whiteness, were abundantly besprinkled with snuff. He wore large buckles in his shoes, and little buckles at his knees: in short, he had all the air of a re-

spectable country clergyman, who paid greater attention to his discourses than to his appearance, and was familiar rather with the Fathers than the fashions.

“ Dear me,” muttered the elderly gentleman, mounting carefully upon a garden chair which afforded him a more extended vision over an angle of the road, and haling from his fob a gigantic silver watch,—“ it’s very strange. Half-past four o’clock, and not yet arrived. They must have met with some accident. I dreaded as much when I found they were coming by the ‘ New Patent Safety.’ Why would not the old Regulator do ? there was plenty of time.” So saying, and condemning *in toto* all modern inventions, new-fangled notions, &c. &c., the Rev. Josiah Sherborne descended from his perch.

He took a few more turns, then seated himself beneath the ample shade of a widely-spreading elm, wiped the perspiration from his brow, and had recourse to a half-emptied tumbler that stoop on a little table by his side.

His next survey repaid him better. The London coach, notwithstanding it was a “ patent

safety" one, appeared in sight. It stopped to deposit passengers at the bottom of the hill on the high turnpike road, from which the less frequented lane, that passed to the Vicarage, diverged, at the distance of some half-mile below; and shortly afterwards the worthy parson's own four-wheeled chaise, which had been dispatched by way of Long-boat to receive his expected visitors at the point of their debarkation,—drove steadily up to the gate.

"Thank Heaven you are come at last!" exclaimed the old gentleman, his whole countenance radiant with pleasure. "How d'ye do, my dear boy? I am delighted to see you;" and he seized by both hands a young man who sprang to the ground to meet him. "Why, yes,—I declare,—you certainly are grown. Martha, don't you think he's grown?"

"Oh, grown! to be sure he is," replied the aged gentlewoman, thus addressed, with the least possible admixture of irony in her assent. In fact, it was the invariable remark of Mr. Sherborne on seeing his son after an absence of any length. He had watched his progress from a

child, and really believed that each succeeding year added something to his stature. Frank, meanwhile,—for it was he,—having lifted a little child from the vehicle, proceeded to assist a lady closely veiled to dismount.

“Welcome! welcome!” exclaimed his father, — “welcome, my dear Miss — Mistress — Miss——”

— “Mistress Montague,” interrupted Frank, with emphasis.

“My poor dear Julia,” exclaimed the old man, as, breaking through all restraint, he clasped her in his arms, and gave her a salute expressive of even parental affection, — “there, take her, take her, sister.”

Miss Martha’s reception, however, though kind, was not entirely divested of formality, and after a brief greeting of a more ceremonious description, the spinster busied herself in looking after the bandboxes; while Mr. Sherborne, catching up the little child in one arm, supported his trembling visiter on the other towards the entrance of the house.

Contrary even to her own expectations, Julia

had rallied most surprisingly. Uncertainty, often far more torturing to the mind than even positive and ascertained evil, had been removed. She now knew the worst. She had found moreover a friend, one who tended her with the affection of a brother.

The society too of his early playmate seemed in some measure to enlighten the gloom that yet hung around the spirits of Frank:—with respect to Clara, lost to him although she was, he had determined to watch over her welfare in silence and in secret, and, unless Major Faulkland's subsequent conduct should render it impossible, to suffer her to remain in happy ignorance of her husband's previous career. Begging therefore his friend Hazeldine to keep an eye upon that gentleman's motions, Frank had determined to place the invalid beneath his own father's roof. How that good old man approved his design and received the lost one into his bosom has been already seen.

Weeks glided calmly on, and an air of cheerfulness gradually pervaded the little vicarage. Frank struggled hard to appear gay, and Julia her-

self brightened and seemed content when he was by. Even Miss Martha abated the greater portion of her reserve ; and as for the old gentleman, he was thoroughly and undisguisedly happy.

As the summer advanced they would sit together in the cool evenings under the shade of some lofty tree, and listen to the quaint stories which the vicar, over his sober glass of home-brewed, loved to extract from the *Nuremburgh Chronicle*, and other tomes of equal age and veracity ; while little Alfred, seated upon his knee, would replace all the insects in the old gentleman's tumbler, with as much industry as its owner had shewn in extracting them, and then the old gentleman would very naturally wonder where on earth all the wasps and flies could come from.

Frequently, too, would they stroll among the rich meadows, wander on the banks of the sparkling Stour, or seek from the summit of some upland knoll to catch a glimpse of the distant sea.

On one of these occasions the chaise was put into requisition for an excursion of unusual length ; the party was bent on visiting "The Lady's Grave," a remarkable spot in a neigh-

bouring parish, some six or seven miles distant from the village.

"The Lady's Grave," as it was called, was a large slab of granite almost hidden by weeds and long rank grass; it was situated in the middle of a large enclosure, and on the summit of a mound of some extent, around which rose the worn-out trunks of several decayed trees, apparently coeval with the tumulus which they surrounded, and seemed as it were to guard.

The day was sultry, and the little party, having examined the tomb, for such it undoubtedly was, —having given vent to their speculations as to the bones which might repose beneath, and endeavoured, but in vain, to decipher something of an obliterated inscription, were thinking of returning, when certain broad and heavy drops of rain gave promise of a coming storm.

Fortunately, at no great distance they espied a cottage, and thither they hastened with all the speed they could exert. The building was of an irregular shape, two of the walls having, to all appearance, once formed part of a mansion of far greater pretensions, while a

rude frontage was thrown across of a humbler and more modern construction. The interior was neat and comfortable in the extreme, and a very clean-looking, lively old woman gave the fugitives a ready welcome.

As the conversation naturally turned upon the object of their late visit, various conjectures were hazarded respecting the occupant of so singular a grave, and the cause of her having fixed upon such an unusual spot,—surmises were offered as to whether the Lady had been a Witch, or a Saint, or anything equally distinguished, while Frank went the length of expressing doubts of its being a grave at all, and Miss Martha declared that if it did, indeed, belong to a Lady, it was a very indelicate thing of her to have it made in so conspicuous a situation. The hostess smiled rather in pity than in anger at all this ignorance and infidelity, and volunteered to give the true and particular history of its origin, as recorded, she said, by a very clever young gentleman, an Oxford Scholar, who had been to see the place the summer before, and “knew all about it.”

The rain still falling heavily and fast, her offer

was eagerly accepted, and the party drawing their chairs closer round the fire, she opened a corner-cupboard of well-polished walnut-tree, and produced from beneath a China bowl, its *dulce decus*, a few leaves of ill-written manuscript, which the "Oxford Scholar," it seems, had made his elderly hostess a present of on his departure, and from which Francis, not without difficulty, managed to decipher the following lamentable and most veracious history.

THE LADY'S GRAVE.

THE LEGEND OF THE NINE ELM TREES.

Bright and fair was the Lady St. Clair,

Her brow was noble, her smile was bland ;

And her sun-bright hair had dimmed the glare

That beamed from her coronet's circling band.

Her riches were greater than I can enumerate,

Nor would you believe my account if I did ;

Then her temper was mild—and she never would
fume, or rate

Servants for not doing what they were bid.

With all these attractions, you needn't be told
That she'd lovers in plenty of every degree,
But some were too cold, and some were too bold
To suit with her maiden modesty.

At their offers so free, she would laugh with
glee,
To try if their patience or pride were the
strongest ;
Till all yielded save three, who, on bended knee,
Still proffer'd their vows the loudest and
longest.

The first was a Courtier, a very gay gentleman,
Guarded with gold (mosaic?) and lace,
But whenever the lady asked, "Pray what's your
rental, man?"
He talked about "Sentiment, Angels, and
Grace."

The next was an Alderman, baiting his hooks
With presents of turtle, when not over dear ;
Instead of soft looks, he referred to his books,
And promised to "settle five hundred a year."

The third was a Hero, in brown pantaloons,
Flanked with blood-red stripes of the deepest
dye;
He wore large moustaches, and looked at the
spoons,
And the "King's pattern" forks, with an elo-
quent eye.

Each pleaded his passion with fervour and might,
And urged every point that could aid and abet
it;
But her Ladyship answered in accents polite,
"Gentlemen all—don't you wish you may get
it?"

"Now listen," she added, "and mark me aright,
No one may hope my wild fancy to please,
Till he's watch'd a whole night without fail,
—'honour bright!'—
In the haunted ring of the Nine Elm Trees."

A thunderbolt hurl'd from the storm-charged
skies,
Had not so bothered these Bachelors three;

They had opened their eyes with far less surprise

Than they did when they heard this alarming decree.

The Courtier said "No—not for ten times her riches!"—

The Alderman "thought it would not be respectable;"

While He in brown breeches said something of Witches,

And Goblins, and Ghosts,—and things quite as delectable.

Then out and spake a gallant young Page,

"O lovely Lady for one bright smile,

I'll gladly engage to watch there an age,

Though Satan keep company all the while."—

One smiling glance the Lady bestows,

O'er bosom and brow her blood mounts high;

And the Man in brown clothes thrice tapped his nose,

And most maliciously cocked his eye.



And now 'tis the hour when bad Spirits have
power

To quit for a while their lonely bed,
And cottage, and tower, and palace, and bower
Teem with the shades of the noiseless dead.

Through the damp chill air goes the Lady St.
Clair,

She cares not a fig for the midnight breeze,
—In a gentleman's hat, and a dark roquelaire,
She speeds her way to the Nine Elm Trees.

“What nonsense!” interrupted Miss Martha Sherborne, who had been looking fidgetty for some time. “In the first place there are not nine trees, and secondly, they are none of them elms.”

“If they are not, they ought to be,” replied the old woman, with undisturbed gravity, and Frank continued:—

She had determined, in sportive jest,
To "play the devil," for once, without metaphor,
Thinking it best in that way to test
A proof of true love which she could never get
afore.

But scarce had she taken her secret stand —
Scarce had she cast one glance around,
Ere a deadly blow, from an unseen hand,
With her life-blood dyed the haunted ground.

The Lady's shrieks soon aroused from their beds
All who were sleeping, and all who were not;—
Heads over heels, and heels over heads,
They hurried *en masse* to that fatal spot.

Then while all stood around in alarm and perplexity,
Forth stepped the Man with the martial habili-
ment;
He admitted the fact,—and expressed himself
vex't that he
Caused so much mischief when no kind of ill
he meant.

He declared, "'pon his honour," 'twas all a mistake,—

That the Page was the person he wanted to stick,
And all sorts of apologies offered to make
For pinking the Lady, and spoiling the trick.

Not a word more tarried that Page to hear,
But ordered them straight a stout cord to prepare ;
Which having fixed under the Gentleman's ear,
He turned to his Lady-love bleeding there.

All in vain did he strive her red blood to staunch—
By the fatal tree expired the maid ;—
So the caitiff they launch from the topmost branch,
And bury the Lady beneath its shade !

Sherborne ceased to read — and as the storm had by this time ceased too, the party rose and began to think of making preparations for their departure.

" But the Page — pray what became of the Page ?" inquired Julia, with a little hesitation, and directing a glance at Frank.

“ Oh, the page ! ” replied the old woman,—
“ I really am not quite sure,—but I think the young gentleman said that he, some time afterwards, married the late Lady’s cook, and turned barber ; and that Joe Hogden, one of his descendants, is still living in the village, and follows the same business.”

The concluding part of this tradition was very naturally considered by the younger people to be perfectly impossible. Miss Martha, however, esteemed it to be by far the most probable part of the whole story.

Meanwhile, the shower having gone off displaying its peacock-like tail in a bow of uncommon brilliancy, the old gentleman forced a trifle upon their hostess, whose “ rescued page of legendary lore ” had afforded them so much entertainment—and bidding her a hearty farewell, the party proceeded to their carriage.

CHAPTER II.

Betsy Jones is married !
Pray what says St. Paul ?
If I 'm not mistaken,
" Marry not at all ! "

Girls before you marry
Mind this golden rule—
" Look before you leap ! "
Or else you 'll play the Fool !

OLD SONG.

MATRIMONY AND REPENTANCE. — THE SYMPATHISING FRIEND.
— THE COMPLAISANT HUSBAND. — THE ANGRY FATHER. —
FAMILY JARS.

TURN we now, gentle reader, to the " Happy Couple," as it is the custom to call all whom the Saffron-coloured God has once enmeshed in his net, though in nine cases out of ten, perhaps, the parties might well plead a misnomer.

A joyless honeymoon did it prove for poor Clara;—in vain did she strive to banish from her memory the vision that had disturbed her bridal day. The image of Frank, pale, ghastly, and reproachful, was ever before her as she had seen him for one moment, and for one moment only—as the carriage parted from her father's door—her husband, however, had never alluded to the circumstance, and she dared not question him—she dared not even think of it.

Major Faulkland, meanwhile, treated her in every respect with the most scrupulous attention—he consulted her upon every point, and paid the utmost deference to her every wish, but yet a cold and chilly manner seemed to hang around his very kindness, and Clara longed for the time when she should once again enjoy the society of her father.

Arrived in London, and established in a handsome house in the vicinity of Berkeley Square, the Major's conduct began gradually to undergo a change;—he did not, indeed, relax in his politeness, but became wonderfully deficient in attendance—day after day he dined out, and re-

turned at hours, and sometimes in a state, by no means usual with lords who are supposed to "love their ladies." More than once, too, "urgent business" had detained him all night :—occasionally indeed he did pass an evening at home, but it was only to entertain a party of gentlemen whose manners and conversation were neither of them very pleasing to his bride. Play invariably succeeded to these entertainments, and seldom did they terminate before broad daylight.

Shunning the sickly glare of the drawing-room lamps, and alone in her elegant but solitary boudoir, Clara felt herself neglected, and began bitterly to repent the hasty step she had taken ; nor was this her only source of uneasiness.

Lord Adolphus Cannonbury was now become a frequent visiter, and his attentions to her, though not positively offensive, were still so marked that she felt surprised and even piqued at her husband's total indifference on the matter. Her only hours of anything approaching to happiness were spent with her father ; nor did her long and oft-repeated visits to Russell Square draw the least comment from the Major—the

same bland smile, and the same set speeches, ever awaited her.

One evening she was sitting behind the old gentleman, who, together with the Colonel, Mr. Thugg, and Miss Magge, was deeply engaged in his favourite game of whist, when a servant announced that a person wished to speak with Mr. Broughton alone, and upon business that would admit of no delay.

Miss Magge was in a perfect agony of curiosity.—Who could it possibly be at that time of night?—What could his business be?—The house could not be on fire, because that would have been announced immediately, and besides there was no disturbance in the street.—Was it possible that the butler had gone mad and cut his throat?—No—he had officiated at the side-board during dinner with his customary *nonchalance*. What could it be?—A quarter of an hour glided by, the Colonel and Mr. Thugg grumbled audibly—another elapsed—perhaps some villain had introduced himself into the house for the purpose of strangling the host, and stealing the spoons;—but no! Miss Magge distinctly heard

from the landing-place, on which she had hastened to post herself, voices in the dining-room below.

An hour had nearly elapsed when the parlour door opened, and a man, enveloped in a large cloak, crossed the hall and quitted the house. In a few minutes Mr. Broughton rejoined his guests—but how changed!—his face was pale as that of a corpse, a cold perspiration stood upon his brow, and every limb trembled as if labouring under the paroxysm of an ague.

He replied not a word to the urgent inquiries of the inquisitive spinster, nor would he afford any explanation to his alarmed and anxious daughter; in vain did the latter, fearing he was seriously ill, beg to be allowed to pass the night in watching by his pillow. He would not listen for one moment to the proposal; he said “it was a mere trifle,” and endeavoured to resume his game. He finished it—but at its close, for the first time in her life, Clara saw tears standing in the old man’s eyes as he kissed her at parting for the night, and bade “God bless her.”

From that day Mr. Broughton was an altered

man,—he muttered to himself with the tears trickling down his cheeks, shut himself up in his own room alone for days together,—saw scarcely any one—and not only refused to unravel the mystery which was evidently in some way connected with the arrival of his nocturnal visitor of the evening alluded to, but became irritable if that interview was even hinted at,—his usual elasticity of mind seemed quite destroyed, and his spirit broken.

This evident distress of her father, which she was not permitted to share, increased the uneasiness of Clara ; she began to view, too, the attentions of Lord Adolphus, which became more pointed every day, not only with disgust but almost with alarm.

One morning his lordship entered her boudoir unannounced ; Clara had been weeping—seating himself by her side, he commenced a commonplace apology for his intrusion, but suddenly checking himself, continued in an altered and tender tone,

“ But, my dear Mrs. Faulkland, something has disturbed you,—nay, it is in vain to deny it, you

are but a poor hypocrite—those bright eyes lack their usual lustre—that fair face is flushed with—”

“ Displeasure, my lord !” interrupted Clara, firmly.

“ Pardon me,” continued his lordship ; “ anger never yet dimmed the eye, though it may have flushed the cheek” — he paused. “ You are unhappy, Mrs. Faulkland — it is vain to disguise it.—You feel yourself united with one who wears you, and regards you but as a brilliant ornament — with one whose soul is uncongenial, whose affections are alienated. You are pining away unappreciated and — unbeloved !”

“ My lord,” exclaimed Mrs. Faulkland, rising, “ this is language which you ought not to utter nor I to listen to.”

“ My dearest Clara — Mrs. Faulkland ; why this reserve with one who sympathises so deeply with your lot ?—whose life and fortune are at your disposal ?—nay, hear me,” he added, seizing her hand.

“ Unhand me instantly,” cried the agitated girl, her fair brow crimsoning with indignation,

—"unhand me, Lord Adolphus, or I alarm the house."

"One word," interrupted her husband's libertine *friend*, still resisting her efforts to disengage herself; — "say but that you forgive me; — love like mine at least may merit pardon if not return—say, fairest, dearest creature!"

The door opened, and Clara rushed from the apartment as Major Faulkland entered it.

The remainder of that day was passed by the insulted Clara in the solitude of her chamber,—the Major dined out, and it was not until the following morning that any conversation could take place between the couple touching the insolence of Lord Adolphus.

When the opportunity at length arrived, Clara waited for some time in the expectation that her husband would open the subject; but the Major proceeded to eat his breakfast—yawned a good deal occasionally, and glanced at the *Morning Post* with his usual imperturbability. All this seemed most unaccountable to his wife; she half feared that such composure might be assumed for the better concealment of some deadly purpose;

—again thinking it just possible that the Major might not have remarked the position of Lord Adolphus, she determined to mention just so much of his insolence as might serve to protect her from any future insult, without involving her husband in a serious, and perhaps fatal, quarrel.

Her apprehensions, however, upon that score appeared upon her adverting to the subject to be perfectly supererogatory—the Major listened, but without expressing either anger or astonishment at the conduct of his friend ; nay, he even went so far as to blame Clara's fastidiousness, and laughed at her want of knowledge of the world.

"My good girl," said he, "all these little unmeaning compliments, to one of your attractions, are to be expected ; they are nothing more than the mere conventional gallantry of a man of fashion, and as such are to be treated."

"Unmeaning compliments—conventional gallantry," repeated Clara in perfect bewilderment at the indifference of her husband.

"Nothing more, I assure you, love,—so think no more about them," returned that gentleman.

"Lord Adolphus dines with us to-day, and you

must positively bid adieu to everything like displeasure, and assure him of your forgiveness:—By the way, it struck me the other evening that the setting of your brooch appeared imperfect. I shall pass Lambert's in the course of the day, and will have it repaired; oblige me, love, by bringing me your diamonds."

Mrs. Faulkland left the room, and on returning placed the jewel-case without a word in the hands of her husband.

"As I expected," remarked the Major, opening the case and carelessly glancing at the trinkets within: "the brilliants here are loosened; they shall be looked to immediately."

So saying, he dropped the box into the breast-pocket of his dressing-gown and resumed his newspaper.

On the afternoon of the succeeding day, Major Faulkland requested an interview with his father-in-law; his reception from the old gentleman had, of late, been cool, but on the present occasion the manner of Mr. Broughton was more than usually distant.

The Major, by no means daunted by his chill-

ing exterior, commenced by inquiring most tenderly after the old gentleman's health—after that of Miss Magge, the Colonel, &c., and finally wound up by hinting that he must trouble his father-in-law for a temporary loan of five hundred pounds.

“Major Faulkland,” replied old Broughton with firmness, “besides ten thousand pounds which you received with your wife, and in addition to the very liberal allowance that has since been regularly paid into your banker's hands, you have within a single twelvemonth obtained from me, under various pretences, above four thousand pounds. I tell you candidly I cannot meet these perpetual demands, and must beg positively to decline acceding to your present request.”

This was the first direct refusal which in all his numerous applications for “temporary accommodation,” the Major had encountered; he affected at first to treat the matter lightly, and requested Mr. Broughton “to be more considerate, as it might injure the credit of both of them should he be compelled to raise the money in any other quarter.”

"You have had my answer," drily replied the old gentleman.

"Am I to understand by this, sir, that you have determined to withdraw from your daughter those luxuries and comforts to which she has always been accustomed?"

"Sir?" uttered Mr. Broughton, with a powerful effort to restrain his feelings.

"I mean," pursued his amiable son-in-law, "that you probably wish our mode of living to be reduced—unnecessary expenses to be curtailed,—horses, carriage, to be put down,—is it so?"

The Major paused for a reply, but obtaining none, continued in the same tone of irony: "If this indeed be your wish, my dear sir, it must be complied with; our establishment shall be reduced. I regret, on account of my adored Clara, that my own resources are not such as to render it unnecessary, but really at present my finances are so much below par, that, without your kind assistance, I shall be unable to support your daughter in the style I could wish, and (pardon the expression) in the style to which,

as so considerable an heiress, as she must eventually prove, she is fairly entitled."

"Doubtless, sir, doubtless," exclaimed the old man, thoroughly roused by this insolent and heartless attack, "burthened as you are with debts, preyed upon by sharpers and blacklegs of every description, you must find your means inadequate to the combined expenses of the gaming-table, of a wife, and a mistress."

"Of a mistress?" repeated the Major, startled by the abruptness of the assault: "do you dare to insinuate, sir?"

"I insinuate nothing," retorted Mr. Broughton, springing from his chair and pacing the room in the greatest agitation,— "I proclaim it,—I know it—I know all,—I know of your abandoned associates, the very refuse of the hells of London,—of the wretched victim whom you discarded to make room for my unhappy daughter,—of the vile woman who, only last night, appeared decked in her jewels,—the bridal jewels of your wife,—I know, sir, of the insult offered to that pure and spotless creature by your *friend*, and with your connivance—nay more, your sanction,—and you

dare to come here,—here to my house, with a smile on your lip, and the most infernal villany in your heart, to ask me—me—for money.”

The old man threw himself into a chair, buried his face in his hands, and while his whole frame quivered with agitation, sobbed like a child.

The Major had recourse to his snuff-box, and gently brushing away with the tips of his fingers a few grains that had fallen on his immaculate shirt frill, said,

“ Be calm, my dear sir, and we will discuss this matter rationally. You must be aware that when your amiable daughter honoured me with her hand, no feeling of love on her part dictated the gift,—it was a marriage of pure convenience, —the lady on the one hand had a personal pique to gratify,—I on the other had a somewhat dilapidated fortune to repair ; — the different objects of both of us, will, I trust, be accomplished ; and as our hearts were perfectly unfettered from the commencement, I see little impropriety in availing myself of a freedom which I had flattered myself was perfectly understood between us.”

“ Major Faulkland,” gasped Mr. Broughton,

" I am an old man,—and a feeble man,—or you would not dare use this language to me ; but beware, sir ; Heaven sometimes arms an injured father with a degree of strength beyond his years and nature."

" Very possibly," rejoined the Major.—" But to return to the five hundred pounds ;—am I to be indebted to you ? — or must the house in Mount Street be disposed of ?—I really see no alternative,—and the horses, the carriage—"

This was too much for the old gentleman's patience ; he actually stamped with rage, shook his clenched fists at his son-in-law, and gasped forth the most awful and unconnected denunciations.

" By Heaven, sir," he almost screamed, " I'll foil you yet,—I'LL MARRY !—I will, sir,—I'LL MARRY, if there's a woman alive to be bought for money."

The Major started,—a close observer might perhaps have detected a momentary flush upon his countenance ; soon recovering his self-possession, however, and his features relaxing into a

smile, he elevated his shoulders, and expressed the great pleasure he should in that case have in congratulating the happy bride.

"May I presume to ask," he added, "upon whom your choice is likely to fall?"

"You may sneer, sir," retorted the old gentleman more calmly, "but I can yet preserve a portion of my property from your grasp, and provide a friend and a refuge for my poor girl when I am gone; meanwhile she remains beneath this roof, which I command you, deep and double villain as you are, to quit at once, and never again to pollute with your presence."

"You shall be obeyed, sir," replied the Major; "but pardon me if I decline to depart alone—my wife must accompany me, unless"—he paused—"a cheque for—"

"Mercenary ruffian, begone!" exclaimed Mr. Broughton, starting up and seizing the bell-rope; "leave the house instantly, or my servants shall hurl you into the street."

"Be it so," said the Major; "now mark me, Mr. Broughton,—unless Mrs. Faulkland returns to her home within four-and-twenty hours, I take

the extremest steps which the law directs for her recovery."

So saying, the Major bowed distantly, and quitted the apartment, fully determined, at all risks, to enforce the return of Clara,—a determination, however, which he was induced to change for the present, by a very sudden and unlooked-for occurrence.

CHAPTER III.

An old man would be wooing
A maiden gay and young.

NEW SONG.

LOVE LIES A BLEEDING.—LOVE AMONG THE ROSES.—THE
EARLY LOST.—THE LATE FOUND.

MEANWHILE affairs at the vicarage were not going on in the same even and quiet tenour in which we have seen matters hitherto conducted there.

Frank Sherborne's visits to the metropolis had become frequent of late, and the duration of his absences from home much prolonged. His father, however, placing the most implicit reliance upon his judgment and principles, never dreamt of questioning him upon a matter of which he himself offered no explanation.

Aunt Martha was not so easily satisfied;

— she disdained, indeed, to make any direct inquiries, but uttered sundry profound and entirely original reflections upon the temptations of the metropolis, the profligacy of young bachelors in general, and the particular gaiety of those of the legal profession, whom, with the exception, indeed, of military men, she looked upon as the most accomplished scholars of a certain influential “old gentleman,” whose name is rarely mentioned in good society. With respect to the latter class, to such a point had they advanced their immorality and moustachios, that she held it to be indecorous to be seen in their society.

There were, however, base and scandalous creatures who ventured to assert that she had not always been so alive to the exceeding sinfulness of a scarlet coat, but had in other days surrendered her young affections to a certain cornet of dragoons; and the same base and scandalous creatures further reported that the papa of this said abominable cornet of dragoons, not approving the match, had induced the young officer to forego that

“Bliss beyond all that the past hath told”—

upon the express condition of receiving in its stead a splendid four-in-hand "set out,"—inferring, probably, that if his heart could sustain so severe a shock without exhibiting any symptoms of breaking, his head might possibly be formed of the same enduring material.—Be that as it may, Bonaparte himself never held the British cavalry in greater detestation than did Miss Martha Sherborne from that day forth.

Frank meanwhile smiled at the good lady's forebodings, and confided his secret, whatever it might be, to Julia alone;—she could sympathise with his shattered hopes, and would listen with a sparkling eye and swelling heart when he talked of all that was past,—of Clara,—of her perilous condition, and of his projects for securing her future peace.

One afternoon, after an absence of unusual length, Frank, as he passed towards the little wicket, that admitted the foot-passenger by a nearer path from the high road to the vicarage glebe, encountered his father. The old man silently took his hand, and the big tears stood in his eyes as he bent them upon his son.

"We are about to lose her, Frank," he said, "she is sinking rapidly—her wounded spirit has made its final effort. May Heaven," he added, after a pause, "have mercy upon him who has dealt this heavy blow!"

Sad — bitter as was this news, Sherborne had been long prepared for it; he returned his father's grasp, but made no other answer.

"Her mind wanders," pursued Mr. Sherborne; "and they tell me that she raves perpetually of you,—that she accuses you of I know not what—of unkindness and insensibility."

Frank started—a suspicion flashed like lightning through his brain; not, perchance, for the first time, but never so vividly before. He hastened to his own room,—there to collect his wandering thoughts and to prepare for an interview which, he foresaw, would be a trying one.

On entering Julia's apartment, some time after, he found her still sleeping, yet it seemed that delirium was raging wild within her brain even in her very dreams.

"Save me — save me from him," she mut-

tered ; “ he tears me — he drags me — save me, Frank — dearest — save me ! ”

Sherborne laid his hand upon the sufferer’s fevered brow to chase away the tormenting phantasies that disturbed her. She awoke on the instant,—looked hurriedly and confusedly around, till she met the gaze of Sherborne fixed upon herself;—for an instant she regarded him with a puzzled look of mingled doubt and joy—then burst into a fit of hysterical laughter. It died gradually away, and an interval of calm and unrestrained rationality ensued.

She now talked of her approaching dissolution with a degree of cheerfulness dimmed only by the recollection of her child, — gazed wistfully at Frank, and bade him be kind to it, and then seemed grieved at having so often repeated the request. Frank endeavoured to give a less sombre turn to the conversation, and led it back to former years, when they had together roamed in careless, happy childhood, without a care to cloud the brow of either, through the green woods then visible through the open window, and gilt with the beams of the declining summer’s sun.

"They were happy, happy days, Frank," returned Julia, looking at the lofty branches beneath whose shade she had so often sat ;—they had sheltered her for the last time ;—the very apartment too in which she lay,—it had been once their study ; it seemed but yesterday that they had together conned their tasks there.

"We little thought," continued Julia, a faint smile playing on her lips, "we little thought the last hour we passed together in this well-remembered room, how soon one of us would breathe her last sigh within it,—but they were happy days,—Frank, you loved me then?"

"And ever have," said Frank, with earnestness, "fondly, dearly loved you, as an only and valued sister."

The hectic spot on either cheek spread downwards over the sufferer's neck,—her eye sunk, her hand faltered in Sherborne's,—she met his glance but for an instant,—it was enough,—her long-cherished secret was discovered, the gush of early recollections had borne down all restraint. Frank pressed affectionately her fevered hand, and was the first to speak.

"Would," he said, "we had loved otherwise ! a far happier lot might have awaited both."

"Say not so," cried Julia mildly, "or you will drive me mad,—my mind cannot bear the racking, agonizing thought,—mention not the possibility,—it could not be,—I say, it could not be,—your whole soul was ever Clara's,—did I but once dream that it might have been mine, I would tear these eyes from their sockets, to avenge their blindness. — Oh ! give me air, — your words have lighted up a fierce fire that scorches to my very brain."

Frank, perceiving that a paroxysm of delirium was again raging in her frame with frightful violence, called loudly for assistance, and Miss Martha, entering, hastened to apply the usual soothing remedies. Frank bitterly regretting his want of caution, quitted the room, to ponder on the heartrending scene which he had just witnessed.

* * * * *

It may be remembered that in the course of Mr. Broughton's last conversation with Major Faulkland, he expressed a determination, much

to that gentleman's apparent amusement, of taking unto himself a wife. The Major had laughed, but the old gentleman was much more serious in his intentions than his worthy son-in-law imagined; he had thought of such a project before, and this interview had decided him; — one little difficulty, indeed, suggested itself,—what wife should he take?

His acquaintance among marrying young ladies was very limited,—Miss Stareleigh was engaged —for the eleventh time, people said.—The Misses Butterby were decidedly bilious,—then there were Mr. Tomkins's seven daughters,—but no!—they sang too loud, dressed too low, and were moreover addicted to pet parrots and poodles.—Lady Smithson Smith had two grown-up daughters, but the eldest was unhappily so very dignified, and so constantly referring to that important year when his Majesty had experienced a fit of indigestion, and her Pa was lord mayor.—The second was young and pretty—too pretty:—the old gentleman passed on.

There was a niece, an orphan girl, whom, being very harmless, very plain, and not pos-

essed of any very fashionable acquirement, Lady Smithson Smith had charitably admitted into her house,—indeed she was by no means likely to prove a formidable rival to her well-portioned and highly accomplished cousins,—and yet upon this humble personage did Mr. Broughton cast his eye!—both his eyes. She was young, healthy, good-humoured, and above all she was very much attached to his daughter.

Mr. Broughton slapped his knee with that energy of determination which shows that a man has thoroughly made up his mind to a thing;—he buttoned up his coat very tight, and sallied forth at once in the direction of Lady Smith's domicile. Long, however, before he had arrived at the stronghold of the gallant knight, his excessive haste subsided,—his manly stride contracted, and he dropped gradually from a chairman's canter, into the deliberative and more decorous pace of a cab-horse off duty.

It was really a rather awkward thing for a gentleman of his age and respectability to propose for the hand of a young lady, who, plain or not, could not but rank his top-boots and buckskins among the earliest reminiscences of her bib-and-

tucker days,—he might be refused,—and there was the bare possibility of being laughed at into the bargain ;—he stopped for the first time in his life to gaze at a print shop,—and lost a new silk pocket-handkerchief as a matter of course ; then having duly considered which side of the square would bring him the sooner to the desired door, he selected the other on pretence of its being the more cleanly. The awful minute, however, arrived at last, and so did he at the house of Lady Smithson Smith,—he knocked a long rambling unintelligible knock, and then complied with the request neatly inscribed upon a brass plate below the knocker, which admonished the visiter to “ ring also,” with a degree of energy and vivacity that snapped the bell-wire.

He was received with the most gracious smiles by Lady Smithson Smith, and her eldest daughter,—still his embarrassment rather grew upon him than otherwise ; a long half-hour had passed, perhaps the longest Mr. Broughton had ever passed in his life, yet not the slightest allusion had been made to his immediate object.

Conversation began to flag ; the weather had been treated of in every conceivable light, with

reference to what it was then,—what it had been some time ago,—what it probably would be, and what it might possibly have been, had the wind been in a different quarter,—with the respective effects which had been or might have been produced thereby. Lady Smithson at length hinted that as the afternoon appeared fine she should drive to the Park, and referred to a very diminutive watch more than once, conveying thereby an intimation as distinctly as the delicacy of a *ci-devant* Lady Mayoress would permit, that she wished her visiter strangled, and wanted to dress.

“ Lady Smithson Smith !” said Mr. Broughton, suddenly striking the palms of his hands together, and proceeding to rub them as if they had been newly anointed with the best “ emollient brown Windsor.”

Lady Smithson declared that Mr. Broughton had made her jump.

“ Can I have five words in private ?” pursued the old gentleman, with the desperate courage of a man who leaps into a cold bath.—Miss Smith left the room.

Mr. Broughton having previously hemmed to the extreme verge of decency, and perceiving no further means of delay, opened his case.

The lady was completely astonished,—of course she had “never liked Major Faulkland,”—always thought there was something wrong about him,—had felt that matters could not last,—had always said so,—and delivered sundry exact predictions which only needed publication some few months earlier to have thrown “wise Mr. Williams” completely into the shade, and to have established Lady Smithson Smith’s reputation as a sooth-sayer of first-rate eminence.

“In short, madam,” said Mr. Broughton at the end of a very long preface, “I have made up my mind at last,—and I have made it up to—marry again.”

“To marry!” ejaculated the lady, opening her eyes with a violence that made them ache all the rest of the afternoon.

“To marry, Lady Smithson Smith,” repeated the old gentleman with energy.

“Marry me!” shrieked his hostess in undisguised alarm.

“ Pooh ! nonsense, not you—but your niece,—there, I have said it, and I say it again,—your niece, Lady Smith.—Do you think that she will have me ? ” inquired Mr. Broughton, with a slight and somewhat tremulous alteration of tone ; “ here I am, — seventy-five ; can’t annoy her long,—and when I *do* go there is three thousand a-year jointure for her to fall back upon.”

“ My dear Mr. Broughton,” replied the lady, “ you are too precipitate,—much too precipitate ; you are not doing yourself justice,—after all, what is seventy-five to a man of your constitution ? ”

As Mr. Broughton did not proceed to answer the interrogatory, notwithstanding the very flattering insinuation which it conveyed, the lady continued :

“ I think we can do a little better for you than that poor Miss Farnham ; she certainly is amiable,—that is at times, very amiable—but then, you know, she is so very—very”— Here Lady Smithson Smith paused and concluded the sentence with a shrug that expressed a perfect cabinet encyclopedia of disagreeables.

“ Why yes, certainly, as you say, I know all

that," replied Mr. Broughton, replying to the gesture, but without having any very distinct idea of what it was he was supposed to know.

"Then," rejoined the lady, drawing her chair nearer and tapping him playfully on the arm, "we must look out for some one a little more *distingue*—possessed of a few more attractions;—now, although it would prove a most severe trial for me to part with either of my dear girls—"

"No, no!" interrupted Mr. Broughton hastily, and looking rather frightened—"no! I could not ask it,—the sacrifice would be too great;—besides, I intend going abroad, and too much beauty and too many accomplishments among those foreign Counts might be inconvenient—eh, you understand me? No,—Miss Farnham is the girl for my money, and if you will only just be so good as to break the matter to her in the first instance, I'll follow it up with a regular letter."

So saying, and without waiting for a reply, the old gentleman shuffled towards the door, apparently in the dread that if he remained a moment longer he might possibly find himself married per force to one, if not to both, of her ladyship's all-accomplished daughters.

CHAPTER IV.

A catchpole, whose polluted hands the gods
With force incredible, and magic charms
Erst have endued; if he his ample palm
Should haply on ill-fated shoulder lay
Of debtor, straight his body, to the touch
Obsequious, (as whilom knights were wont)
To some enchanted castle is conveyed,
Where gates impregnable and coercive chains
In durance strict detain him, till, in form
Of money, Pallas sets the captive free.

PHILIPS.

AN ARREST.—A COMPROMISE.—A RELEASE.—A HIGH STAKE
AND A BOLD GAME.

THE “unforeseen circumstance” to which we alluded as having diverted the course of Major Faulkland’s play, was no other than the arrest of that gallant officer by his excellent friend, Mr. Isaaks.

A coolness and want of cordiality had of late arisen between these allies, originating, doubtless, in the little finesse practised upon the "gentleman of the Jewish persuasion" by the Major on his wedding-day. Mr. Isaaks' feelings had indeed been much hurt on that occasion, at least, so he avowed, and he further stigmatised such conduct as tending to destroy all confidence between gentleman and gentleman;—he had in consequence abandoned his usual delicacy of proceeding, and made his caption without any warning, and in public.

The Major, however, was unquestionably a "truly great man," and far from being discouraged by this summary seizure, which would have *non-plus'd* any ordinary character—he took the bailiff's arm with evident condescension; declared that he, Mr. Isaaks, was the person of all persons whom he most wished to see; and next proceeded to demonstrate, in the most convincing manner possible, that no two things could be so indissolubly united as were his—the said Mr. Isaaks'—interests and his own.

Arrived at "the house of business" in Chan-

cery Lane, Faulkland's first object was to effect as speedy and advantageous a compromise as possible with his father-in-law, without which, although he had done much to re-establish himself in the esteem of his present guardian, he foresaw his genius would be disagreeably cramped.

The old gentleman, however, proved obstinate—he had been, in fact, thoroughly aroused, and, having now placed himself in Sherborne's hands, to whom he owed his original information, positively refused to listen to any terms whatever until a formal deed of separation should have been drawn up between the Major and his daughter.

Faulkland hesitated—

“Ye see, Major, something must be done,” observed the Jew, pushing across the table a bottle of what, in such places, is conventionally termed claret, — “fourteen, fifteen, and the running account at the ‘*Nick*,’ — it would take sixteen thousand pounds to do it handsomely and set you straight.”

Faulkland swallowed a tumbler of the wine, but made no reply; his attention was fixed on a heap of papers before him.

"Then, Mam'zelle Angeline," pursued Mr. Isaaks ;—"very agreeable young lady—with undeniable taste, but don't you think booking eleven hundred in trinkets rather an expensive way of showing it?"

"Well, well," replied the Major impatiently, "I have determined ;—Clara must go, although I had a better game to play with her ;—she would have been a fine card in my hand."

The conversation was here interrupted by Mr. Broughton's solicitor, who came for Major Faulkland's final decision. The Jew retired, and after some discussion the Major at length, though not without manifest reluctance, assented to the separation, on the condition of a thousand pounds being handed over for his immediate emergencies, and his usual allowance secured to him during his father-in-law's life.

This business completed and certain other necessary forms having been gone through, Faulkland once again took his leave of Mr. Isaaks, declining a very pressing invitation from that gentleman, to stay and "take pot-luck" with him "quite in an unprofessional way."

It was at a late hour on that same evening that the Major bent his footsteps in the direction of Soho-square ; he paused opposite a house in one of the obscure streets in that neighbourhood, and applied for admittance.

The door was opened with great caution by a boy not remarkable for cleanliness, and whose manner exhibited a degree of self-possession beyond his years, bordering perhaps upon assurance,—he was clothed in a bob-tailed upper garment of grey drugget, set off with a red collar and large plated buttons, being evidently his coat of livery, and one only to be worn upon state occasions.

“ Master and missis is out,—gone to Brighton —be back in a fortnight” — said the bob-tailed boy, without waiting for Major Faulkland’s inquiry.

“ I *must* see him nevertheless,” returned Faulkland, “ and that instantly.”

“ Then perhaps,” observed the boy, “ you would like to stop, while I steps and fetches a spy-glass.”—

“ There was a sound of revelry up stairs,”

and the Major heard it; so pushing open the door he advanced into the passage, nearly trampling under foot the diminutive janitor that would fain have opposed him.

"I say, my tulip," exclaimed the latter, looking up as he was roughly thrust aside; "I shouldn't wonder at all if I vos to tread on your toes if you vos to come any further."

How far the Major would have been influenced by this attempt at intimidation it is difficult to say, but the attention of both parties was now attracted to a voice from above, which begged, in the name of the devil, to be informed, "What was the row?"

"Vy nothing to speak of, sir," answered the boy: "only here is a gen'leman as insists upon seeing you 'mediately, though you are gone to Brighton, and will be back in a fortnight;—shall I pitch in, sir?"

"'Tis I,—Faulkland,"—exclaimed the Major; "call off your cub, or I may chance to wring his neck."

"Show the gentleman up, ye young Imp," roared the voice, which Faulkland had already

recognised as having issued from the lungs of no less a personage than Mr. Robert Coryton himself.

Accordingly the "young Imp," abandoning every idea of "pitching in," changed his manner at once, in one of the greatest possible politeness preceded the visiter, and ushered him forthwith into his master's apartment, which, when his eyes had become tolerably accommodated to the thick atmosphere of tobacco-smoke, the Major perceived to contain some dozen or fifteen shadowy guests, with whose features he was for the most part acquainted.

The room itself seemed to possess an air of foul finery in very exact keeping with its occupants:—the paper was glaring but soiled, a chandelier exceedingly dirty and despoiled of its just proportions, hung from the blackened ceiling, and a large mirror, cracked throughout its circumference and surmounted by a dingy gilt eagle, shone from behind the chairman.

Lithographs, chiefly representing ladies' heads, with a liberal allowance of neck thereto attached, adorned the walls, while a heap of dice boxes and table-rakes, that appeared in one corner, induced

a suspicion that the possessor was not altogether a stranger to the *arcana* of billiards, hazard, and *rouge et noir*.

With respect to the present occupants they were chiefly remarkable for a profusion of gilt buttons, chains, and satin stocks, attended with a cautious display of linen; the larger proportion of the party appeared to consist of foreigners, whose large black eyes were fastened in hungry anticipation upon a couple of very young men of less vicious look, who were evidently far advanced towards a state of "civilization."

"Come, my lord," cried Mr. Coryton, to one of these individuals, as he was betraying a decided inclination to go to sleep, his head resting upon the shoulder of a gaily attired lady by his side; "come, wake up and take another weed,—‘Evohe Bacche,’ as you say at Oxford."

The young Oxonian opened a pair of lacklustre eyes, and, taking a cigar, proceeded to light it in a manner that forcibly brought to mind the execution scene in the historical play of Punch and Judy. Meanwhile the Major beckoned the host aside.

"Coryton," said he, "you must quit this foolery, and accompany me on business of the last importance."

"My dear Major," expostulated Mr. Coryton, in a plaintive tone, "consider my position—my feelings—the duties of hospitality—such devilish pleasant fellows, too:—d'ye recognise our friend on the right?"

"Not I," replied the Major, bestowing a careless glance upon the individual in question.

"It is"—the name was given in a mysterious whisper—"just returned from abroad—you understand—well made up, isn't he?"

"Ha!" muttered Faulkland, regarding the traveller with interest; "the matter I have in hand lies somewhat in his line."

Here he, in turn, dropped his voice to an under tone.

"D—n it, Major!" stammered Coryton in reply, "you know I never touch pen and paper—bones and pasteboard, to any amount you please, and as long as you please, but I can't stand up to stationery."

To this unconnected, and rather obscure alle-

gory, Faulkland replied, with a smile, "That he needed nothing more than an immediate introduction to a certain curious artist with whom he, Mr. Coryton, had occasional dealings."

"Can't you wait till to-morrow?" inquired his friend, looking ruefully towards the table; "it is such a very ungentle hour to break in upon a gentleman, and we are just going off to 'The Nick' with a pair of raw Oxford swells."

"Not an instant," rejoined the Major, in a tone not to be misunderstood; and the obedient Mr. Robert, without further delay, shrugged his shoulders and rang the bell.

"Mike, my great-coat."

"And Mr. Mike, ye divil's darling," cried one of the young "freshmen," in a slightly Hibernian accent, "lave off making the punch in pails, and begin with the boiler."

Under cover of the applause which followed this brilliant academical sally, Coryton conveyed an intimation to the lady before-mentioned that she must be content to entertain their guests alone for a short period. "*He* insists upon it," he added, in a lower key. The lady made no

answer, but directed a glance of such malice and distrust at Faulkland, that it showed plainly "they had met before." The Major, however, met it without embarrassment, and, bowing low, followed his friend from the apartment.

"This man may be relied on? you are certain on that point?" he inquired as he joined Coryton in the street.

"Otherwise he would not be honoured with my extensive patronage," replied the latter.

"And his skill," said Faulkland.

"Exquisite," returned the other; "he makes all the autographs for the British Museum, besides foreign libraries; and for loading a die or paring a pack, on the honour of a gentleman, I don't know his equal. He is a regular genius, rely upon it,—his very soul is in his profession."

The pair had now entered upon a labyrinth of narrow dirty streets, the very citadel of vice, infamy, and wretchedness. Here Mr. Coryton took the lead, and pursued his intricate course, rendered doubly gloomy by the darkness of the night, without the slightest degree of uncertainty or symptom of hesitation.

"To what infernal den are you bringing me? 'tis as dark as pitch," exclaimed the Major, stumbling at every step on the uneven pavement.

Mr. Coryton coolly replied, that the gentleman of whom they were in quest "was only waiting till Lady-day to move into Grosvenor Square," but that in the interim he contented himself with a temporary retreat in the very heart of St. Giles's.

"Nice situation," he continued, increasing his speed to the manifest discomfiture of the Major; "just the very spot for business — in the neighbourhood of the theatres,—close to the water—handy to the West-end, equally so for the City."

The Major was in no mood to appreciate all the advantages of the location, but muttering an oath, bade his guide slacken his pace.

Passing one of those vast and brilliantly illuminated buildings, sacred to alcohol, that spring up in rank luxuriance among the squalor and misery of the quarter they were in,—feeding alike on the aged and the young, the starving mechanic, and the prodigal robber,—they proceeded for some distance in a direction contrary to that which they had been hitherto pursuing. At

length, turning up a narrow alley, Mr. Coryton stopped to reconnoitre a low, ruinous-looking house, on whose dusky walls the filth of years was encrusted. The ground-floor exhibited the outward signs of a rag-shop, or, as it is technically termed, a repository for Marine stores ;—a huge black doll, in a pseudo-white frock, swung suspended over the window, beneath which a steep flight of steps led to a cellar below ; either side of this, anything but *facilis, descensus* was garnished with pairs of short basket-hilted swords, the appearance of which in a melodrame invariably indicates the approach of a “ terrific combat ;” while from a window above projected a long pole, displaying sundry specimens of ragged-looking wearing apparel, and betokening the residence of a “ scourer and cleaner,” a profession, to judge from the articles exposed, not held in great repute in this particular neighbourhood.

Mr. Coryton, having concluded his survey, opened a sort of hatch, and entered the shop ; the Major followed, striking his head in so doing against the pictured representation of a very yellow cart, the original of which was “ warranted

to remove goods safely and with expedition, from, and to, any part of the town."

"Is the old file in?" inquired Mr. Bob Coryton of an individual whose garments indeed were feminine, but whose sex was not so readily determined.

"Who d'ye mean?" asked this "questionable Shape," looking with suspicion at the intruders, and at the same time placing itself completely in front of a small inner door.

"The professor, my beauty," returned Mr. Coryton; "and if he is in, he'll be happy to hear that Captain Max has called to pay his respects; so move that 'mould of form' and tell him so;—three threes is the number!"

This speech, the charm of which probably lay in the conclusion, produced a satisfactory result; the woman, for as a matter of convenience we will allow the thing to have been one, opened the small door in her rear, and lumbered up a flight of stairs behind it;—a dialogue was heard above in terms wholly unintelligible to Faulkland; then the moving of some heavy article across the floor, and then of the woman lumbering

down again, who on her re-appearance courteously informed her visitors that they might go up and be —.

Availing themselves of the former, and more convenient, half of this kind permission, the Major and his companion groped their way up a steep and narrow staircase, mouldering and damp with unwholesome vapours; they were received on the top by an elderly-looking personage, who conducted them into a comfortably furnished apartment, and having surveyed them with scrutinizing keenness, motioned them to be seated, himself setting them the example.

He was a man of a mild and benignant aspect, and could scarcely have seen half a century, yet his hair was blanched and thin, his face wrinkled and sallow, but lighted up by a pair of eyes such as the proudest beauty might have envied; they were of the darkest hazel, and though of soft and winning expression, shone with all the brilliancy of intellectual fire; he was attired in a loose grey morning gown, black trousers and gaiters, highly polished shoes, and a very white cravat; not a speck of dust was visible upon his apparel,

and a similar air of neatness pervaded the whole chamber; the furniture consisted chiefly of a large and handsome library-table full of drawers, and covered with papers, "a stand-up desk," upon which two dazzling lamps were burning,—and a massive iron-bound chest. Several large books were arranged on shelves around the sides of the apartment, and a basket, intended to contain torn papers, stood by the easy-chair of the old gentleman.

Faulkland gazed around in considerable astonishment; not that there was anything at all strange or unusual in the room or what it contained;—it might have belonged to a lawyer, a banker, a divine, or a student;—the only wonder was, as in the celebrated case of the fly in amber, "How the devil got it there?"

"Well, my old boy, you remember me, I see," observed Mr. Coryton in a tone of easy assurance, intended to convey to Faulkland an idea of the vast intimacy that subsisted between himself and the person whom he addressed.

The "old boy" replied merely by a cold bow.

"Well then," returned the other, "let me:

introduce to you my excellent friend Major—no, no, Mr. — Mr. Jonathan Jeremiah Smith,—that will do, — Jonathan Jeremiah is his proper name, but Smith, you know, is like *Homo*, a name common to all men.”

The professor, as he had been termed by Coryton, fixed his keen and penetrating glance for full half a minute upon the Major before he spoke.

“Your business, sir?” said he, at length, a peculiar and pleasing smile playing round his lips as he uttered the words.

“Why, to be brief,” replied Faulkland, “I have sought you out for the purpose of putting to the trial your reputed art.”

“Which art?” asked the old man with the same meaning yet cautious smile. “I am thought to be master of many.”

“That,” replied the Major in a significant manner, “of preparing *fac similes* of handwriting, in which I have been given to understand you are unrivalled.”

The old man again cast a scrutinizing look upon Faulkland, then rejoined, “I think, Mr.

Smith, we had better talk over this matter in private; time is required for the exhibition you request, and—we may detain your friend.”

“Perhaps you may wish to rejoin your party,” said the Major, turning to Coryton, who with great alacrity took the hint and his hat, and retired forthwith.

“Now,” said the old man, having carefully fastened the door and resumed his seat, “Now we can proceed without chance of interruption; the presence of a third person might make my hand unsteady.”

“Examine that,” said Faulkland, placing a parchment in the hands of the professor;—the eyes of the old man glistened with delight as he perused it.

“You play high, sir,” he said, still gazing on the document; “a very high game indeed;—it is a noble stake.”

“That is the name to be affixed to the instrument,” pursued the Major, as he handed across another slip of paper, bearing, apparently, a signature torn from some letter.

The old man glanced at the writing, and, re-

turning the parchment to his visiter, muttered as to himself, "Ten thousand pounds—it is very high—the risk will be proportionate,—so must be the fee."

"Name it," said the Major.

"One hundred guineas," replied the professor slowly and calmly, "to be paid upon the spot, and two hundred guineas on the negotiation of the bond."

The Major appeared evidently unprepared for the largeness of the demand. "A mere trifle," continued the other, in comparison with the sum which Major Faulkland will acquire by the transaction."

Faulkland started from his chair. "You have my name," he exclaimed, "how acquired, I know not; but beware, old man; it is a knowledge fraught with danger to its possessor: let me see but one symptom of trifling or treachery, and I stab you as you sit."

"Sit down, sir," replied the old man perfectly unmoved:—"Sit down.—Let us talk the matter over calmly. Your friend's hint and that name,"

motioning towards the slip of paper, "give me yours; my profession necessarily brings me acquainted with the connexions of people of fortune;—rest assured, sir, your secret is in excellent keeping."

"We understand each other then," returned the Major resuming his seat: "be faithful, and your money shall be paid to the utmost farthing, and to the moment;—betray me, and the knife quivers in your heart."

"Very good,—a bargain," said the professor; "the bond shall be executed by to-morrow morning, and delivered into your hands at what hour, and in what place you please, upon the receipt of the said hundred guineas. I must rely upon your honour, and my own knowledge of your secret, for the remainder;—but I should much like to see something more of Mr. Broughton's handwriting; if possible, his signature attached to some legal instrument."

While the Major was busied in searching his pocket-book for further documents, his companion, without appearing to observe him, took

up a pen, glanced for an instant at the signature before him, and carelessly dashing off a copy, pushed it towards Faulkland.

"Perfect!"—exclaimed the latter, astonished beyond measure at the correctness of the imitation, and the rapidity with which it had been made. "Perfect, by heaven!"

"Not exactly," replied the old man, smiling at the other's surprise, "but it will be in the morning."

Faulkland having given him all the specimens of Mr. Broughton's writing which he had in his possession, and appointed the hour and place of rendezvous for the following day, prepared to take his leave.

It now suddenly occurred to him, that he had dismissed his guide, and had not the most indistinct idea of the place in which he was, or of any mode of getting out of it; the old gentleman, however, relieved him from the difficulty by summoning a fair-haired interesting boy, equally neat and cleanly as himself.

"Arthur, my good lad," he said, "you will

conduct this gentleman whither he may require ; and," added he, in a low tone as the Major was departing, " if you reward the child, be careful he catches no glimpse of your purse or its contents,—above all, keep him before you ! "

CHAPTER V.

With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
 Across the foaming brine,
 Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
 So not again to mine.

BYRON.

CONSTERNATION.—VITUPERATION.—EXPATRIATION.—A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD, AND AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

MR. BROUGHTON'S suit went prosperously on ; his next object, however, which was to keep both his design and success a secret, as signally failed ; the wax was scarcely cold on the letter of acceptance, ere the World (at least that vast portion of it contained in the respective circles of acquaintance of the parties) was discussing all its particulars.

Of course the said "World" was much shocked at the enormity of the proceeding, and came to

the charitable conclusion, as these sorts of Worlds usually do, that the Gentleman was out of his senses, and the Lady a wretch.

On the report reaching Miss Magge's ears, she positively declined to believe those respectable organs till her eyes also should add their testimony to the fact; then, indeed, the slight aberration of intellect with which Mr. Broughton had been invested by the kindness of his friends at large, would sink to nothing compared with the raving insanity which, as she declared, would be attributed to him by the fair spinster.

"The Simpleton! the Madman! the—the—the superannuated old Jack—" she could not quite pronounce the concluding word of the climax,—"to make himself miserable and degrade his daughter—to marry at his time of life,—and such a little ugly, chattering, insignificant minx too!—if indeed he had chosen some intimate friend,—some one used to his eccentricities, some prudent, experienced person such as—"—a glow, long unknown, stole through the lady's veins,—a feeble blush, probably for the last time, re-visited her sallow cheek,—the

only approach to "damask" which it had experienced for many a long year,—she sighed, but she had not courage to give full utterance to the personal pronoun.

But notwithstanding all this "war of the many against *two*," Mr. Broughton did actually in his own good time espouse the "little, plain, &c. &c." individual alluded to,—and, what is yet more remarkable, no sooner was the ceremony performed, than he packed up four new blue coats with gilt buttons, and a proportionate number of buckskin habiliments, in a travelling carriage, and started, at the rate of twelve miles an hour, for the Continent.

The old gentleman was desperate,—indeed the highly consistent conduct of his acquaintances had nearly produced the very phrenzy which they had foretold,—and at that particular juncture had an embassy to the potentate of Crim Tartary, the Pope, Prester John, or the Grand Llama of Thibet, been offered for his acceptance,—the command of an expedition of discovery to the North Pole, or a Poor Law Commissionership in the Island of Owyhee,—he had scarcely de-

clined the appointment, — anything would have appeared preferable to his present exposure to the commiseration of his friends and the extortions of Major Faulkland.

It so happened, however, that none of these diplomatic situations were placed at his disposal, so he took up the *Gazetteer*.—Florence was the first name that caught his eye :—

“ Of all the fairest cities of the earth
None is so fair as Florence.”—

Not that he knew anything about that, but fair or foul, to Florence did he determine to bend his steps, and that with the greater readiness, perhaps, because he had frequently met a gentleman who had passed many years there, and had returned very nearly as stout as he set out ; from which circumstance Mr. Broughton very justly concluded, not only that there really was such a place as Florence, but that there was also a possibility of journeying thither, and that the air was such as might, in particular instances, be inhaled by English lungs without any reasonable dread of instant decom-

position,—matters which he held in some doubt as regarded “foreign parts,” in general.

“Frank, my boy,” said he, as they sat together, in what he called his study, on the evening previous to his marriage, “you know why I do this;—you can bear witness that my sole object in thus uniting myself with Miss Farnham is to secure a comfortable home for my poor dear girl after my decease, and to baulk that cold-blooded villain, Faulkland, of one-third of his expected income.—I suppose they will laugh at me a good deal,” he added, after a pause: “well, thank Heaven, I shan’t hear them.—Do you know what Coolie says?”

Frank smiled slightly, but returned no answer.

“Ah, that will do—I see,” exclaimed the bridegroom in expectancy, “and you may tell him from me he is an obstinate old blockhead not to appreciate my motives better. You, at least, don’t doubt me, Frank?”

“Not for an instant,” replied Sherborne eagerly.

“Francis,” pursued the old man in a graver tone of voice, almost amounting to solemnity:

"I have wronged you, — we have all wronged you, and that past redemption ; but 'tis past, and I trust forgiven."

Sherborne pressed the trembling hand that was offered him.

"Yes, yes, I know it is," continued Mr. Broughton ; "but I have one favour to beg, Francis. — Faulkland ! — though the ocean will separate us, yet, I own, I dread his influence, — sleeping or waking that bad man's form still haunts me ; — for my sake, Frank, — for the sake of one who must be nameless, — keep a watchful and a wary eye upon that man."

Sherborne said nothing, but there was that in his flashing eye and compressed lips that told his companion the injunction was unnecessary. A long and a sad journey was in prospect, and he proceeded with an overflowing heart to take his leave of his aged friend.

"Heaven bless you !" cried the latter, a tear starting into either eye as he spoke : "you will bid farewell to Clara ?" Sherborne shook his head. "Well, perhaps better not ; — it is not for us," he concluded, "to arraign Provi-

dence, but had it been pleased to have con-founded this black scheme of villany, we would never have parted in this world ; as it is, there is a something which tells me that we now do so for the last time."

On quitting Russell Square Frank hastened to place himself upon the Dover mail : — it was a boisterous night, and he wrapped his box-coat closely around him, wondering, as he watched the men carelessly throwing up the letter-bags, if amid the various miseries they would arouse on the morrow, any one prospect would be unfolded as dismal as his own. He was about to return to his father's house — no smiling faces — no glad hearts there awaited him : it was a house of mourning. Julia, the playmate of his youth — the sympathising sharer of his later trials, lay a corpse within its walls.

Although various and extensive have been the improvements lately introduced into the parish of Meltham, the church and churchyard have by great good fortune escaped their influence. The vicarage, as has been stated, is completely remodelled ; the medical gentleman has affixed a new

and brilliant brass-plate to his door, above which a hand, adorned with graceful flourishes, directs attention to "the Night bell," and over all a stout glass bottle, filled with a pink aperient, is distinctly visible in the fan-light;—the little ale-house, too, — a favour conceded to the reiterated requests of the "nobility and gentry" of the neighbourhood,—has erected a flag-staff, and four green boxes, in a small potato-field; an adjoining half acre has been tastefully laid out in cabages and gooseberry bushes, the whole forming, as we gather from a rainbow-looking inscription over the entrance, "A delightful tea-garden, with extensive pleasure-grounds."

But the churchyard still exists simple and retired as when it received within its cold bosom the broken-hearted Julia—it lies buried in wood, being separated from the park of a nobleman, the patron of the living, and of which park it seems to form a portion, by a thick screen of yew and cypress; these, planted in a semicircle, close up nearly to either extremity of the church, while tall forest trees towering beyond, appear, like gigantic warders, to be defending the peaceful

spot alike from the incursions of the tempest and of man.

All here was hushed and still as if each home was tenantless, and the village contained no inhabitant save those who were gathered here, — as if the medical gentleman had done his worst, then tied up his night-bell, swallowed the pink aperient over the door, and departed in search of his patients to another clime.

Gradually the clattering of hoofs on the rough and uneven road broke upon the stillness of the night ; and a horseman, wrapped in a large cloak, reined up his steed by the churchyard-gate : he dismounted, and, fastening his bridle to the rail, entered the burial ground. No breath was stirring, no sound was audible — a bright harvest-moon, rising above the leafy screen before alluded to, shone full upon the ivy-clad tower of the old grey church, and left half the enclosure wrapped in the deepest gloom.

The traveller paused : — the witchery of the scene conjured up feelings strange to his breast — it was a spot, it was an hour, to drown all consciousness of the present — to recall the past,

— to induce vague dim apprehensions of the future.

He gave one glance towards the silent village that slept in the moonlight below, then looked on the green turf, beneath which their “rude forefathers” lay sunk in that deeper sleep; — his was not a spirit to wander long amid such thoughts, and he passed on to the object of his visit.

Quitting the narrow pathway, he strode over the grass-grown mounds towards the extreme edge of the churchyard, where the yew trees threw their darkest shade, till treading upon some earth that had been lately broken up, he drew hastily back. Nothing told of the bosom, so lately warm, that lay but a few feet beneath his heel; yet his frame shook as though a spectre had crossed his path — he felt he was standing above that once-loved form which had so often drunk in life and happiness from his smiles — he threw back his cloak, and tore the handkerchief from his swelling throat.

“Poor fond girl!” he muttered, “I have quenched the light in thine eyes, and chilled

thy happy heart. I did not deem," he added, in a low husky tone, "the blow would have sunk so deep."—At this moment a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder.

The traveller started — the unexpectedness of the shock sent the blood rushing back to his heart: recovering himself, however, in an instant, he demanded fiercely the cause of so abrupt and rude a salutation.

The individual who had thus approached him unperceived, gazed steadily for some moments on his flushed brow, then pointing towards the grave below said slowly, "You triumph, sir — your victim lies before you."

"Ha! Sherborne!" exclaimed the other: "pass on! — or, spy and coward as you are — I'll strike you to the ground."

"I am loth, Major Faulkland," replied Frank, "to disturb that wholesome remorse which, standing where you do, must wring even your heart; — but I must do my errand."

"Errand? — what errand can you have to me? and from whom?" was the reply, ut-

tered in a tone approaching to menace, yet tremulous withal, and as if checked by some powerful and controlling emotion.

“A melancholy one,” said Sherborne; “and from one who never will trouble you with message more.”

“Be brief, sir,” returned the Major, haughtily.

“Receive this,” pursued Frank, giving into the hand of the other a plain gold ring: “you may remember it — the hand on which it rested is even now between us — the wearer bade me restore it to him who placed it there, trusting that it might sometimes recall a kind remembrance of her, and a gleam of affection for her child; and further, she bade me say, her dying prayer was that Heaven might forgive him as she did.—Farewell, *Captain Montague!* — here — by her grave I render up my trust!”

Faulkland thrust the ring within his bosom, and without a word in answer to the concluding sarcasm, though the sound of the assumed name, under which his villanies had been perpetrated,

ing with them anything material to influence the fortunes of those connected with our tale. Mr. Broughton continued to reside with his family at Florence. The Major was living a life exceedingly grateful to one of his peculiar bent. He had achieved Crockford's, engaged rooms in the Albany, introduced a cab of unrivalled style, and was supposed to be honoured with very particular approbation by the *première danseuse* of the Opera. As for Frank, he had located himself again in his quiet chambers, and applied himself to the study of Coke upon Littleton, *et id genus omne*, with more perseverance if not with the energy of former times.

One morning—it might be nearly a year since he had recurred to his studies in his old abode, — on returning from his morning's walk, he fancied himself regarded with unusual interest by a gentleman who kept at no great distance in his wake.

Frank quickened his pace, but although his pursuer appeared, like Hamlet, "somewhat fat and scant of breath," he nevertheless tripped on with marvellous activity. Determined not to be

dogged, Frank increased his speed as much as possible without breaking into an actual canter; still his obese friend did not appear to lose way, but bounded lightly on like an Indian-rubber gentleman.

Sherborne at length began to feel annoyed at his assiduity, and in order to put a final stop to a proceeding which he disliked he knew not why, turned abruptly down the first street that presented itself, and after a quarter of an hour's sharp walking regained his apartments by a circuitous route.

He had hardly seated himself and placed a formidable array of books in convenient order before him, when the little scrubby hobble-de-hoy, who in our Inns of Courts usually unites the offices of clerk, porter, and valet, to young gentlemen learned in the law, informed him that a gentleman desired to speak with him; an order for the said gentleman's admission having been issued, to his surprise, the same corpulent individual who had so lately been hunting him, and whom he had flattered himself he had just distanced so cleverly, was ushered in.

"Don't be alarmed, sir,—don't be alarmed, sir," he exclaimed, perceiving that Frank was about to rise—Frank was never less alarmed in his life, but his visiter had been accustomed to inspire terror wherever he went, and assumed its presence now as a matter of course.—"Don't be frightened, my visit is not professional."

"It is not one of mere ceremony I should imagine," replied Sherborne smiling.

"Oh no, by no means—no! I presume I have the honour of addressing Mr. Sherborne?"—Frank bowed,—"and perhaps you are not aware who is the personage that has that honour?"

Frank intimated that he was so far unfortunate.

"I, sir," pursued the stout gentleman, bringing his feet into the third position and throwing back his head, a movement which much facilitated the disengaging of his shirt-frill, and materially aided the effect of the attitude. "I, sir, am Mr. Isaaks — *the* Mr. Isaaks — sworn officer of the Sheriff for the county of Middlesex, and at your service —" he bowed with dignity.

"Indeed," said Frank.

"Fact," rejoined the other; "but do not be

nervous—I have cast off the officer; he has not entered this apartment;—here, sir,—I am proud to say,—I am but plain Mr. Isaaks.”

Without paying much attention to this nice distinction, Frank inquired in what character and for what purpose “plain Mr. Isaaks,”—our old acquaintance, whose weight, in every sense of the word, had much increased since last we enjoyed the felicity of his society,—had given him the pleasure of his company.

“Before I reply at length to your very natural question,” returned the Jew, “will you be good enough to inform me if you are not acting as agent, confidential adviser—man of business in short, to a gentleman of the name of Broughton, of Lindsay Court, in Kent, who has been for some time past living in Italy?”

“I am charged with the superintendence of that gentleman’s estates during his absence, unquestionably,” said Frank.

“Umph!” ejaculated Mr. Isaaks; “now, sir, can you oblige me so far as to say whether, immediately previous to his departure from England, Mr. Broughton executed any deed of im-

portance,—of course I mean any deed exclusive of those connected with his marriage?”

“None, sir, I should conceive of any importance to a perfect stranger,” replied Sherborne coolly.

“Ah, exactly,” said Mr. Isaaks; “but pray, sir, do not view me in the very unfavourable light you appear to see me in; believe me, sir, I take a very deep interest,—I don’t exaggerate at all when I say I take a *very* deep interest—very deep indeed in Mr. Broughton’s family. I have the honour to be a good deal employed, sir, by one of its members;—we are under great and mutual obligations to one another.—Now, sir, all I wish you to inform me of is — only to avoid the delay of an application by letter, — whether the venerable head of that family executed any bond to the amount of some thousands in August last?”

“I can guess the name of your employer, sir,” said Frank, “though I confess I do not see the motives for the inquiry.”

“Quite honourable—sir, nothing but——!”

interrupted the bailiff, placing his hand upon the spot which, in mankind in general, is said to contain the heart.

“Doubtless,” continued Sherborne, “and as there can be no reason to the contrary, I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Broughton executed no such instrument, as the one you allude to, with my knowledge, and that he could scarcely have done so without it.”

“Oh! oh! he didn’t—didn’t he?” exclaimed Mr. Isaaks jumping up,—“that’s quite sufficient:—good-day, sir; your most obedient.—Pray don’t trouble yourself,—I can let myself out,—I rather prefer it.”

And before Frank, had he been so minded, could have reached the stair, the door had closed upon his visiter.

“Now what, in heaven’s name, does all this mean?” quoth Mr. Frank Sherborne to himself;—but as the person whom he addressed knew nothing about the matter, of course he received no information on the subject.

Early as it yet was, the bailiff on quitting

Sherborne's chambers, proceeded thoughtfully yet rapidly towards the apartments of Major Faulkland.

On reaching the Piccadilly entrance of the Albany, a tall, awkwardly-built man, habited in a rough great-coat with wooden buttons, lounged up to him and touched his hat.

"He is safe?" asked the Jew with eagerness: —the man removed the stump of a very black cigar from his mouth, squirted the juice dexterously out of one corner of it, and replied simply, "Saferr nor the Monument — Bill 's at t'other end."

"Then keep close — I'll make myself heard if I require assistance." The man leaned back against the wall and winked — it cost him less exertion than a reply or even a word of assent would have done, and he was evidently an economist in labour.

Mr. Isaaks proceeded without further delay straight to the Major's rooms, and found that gentleman, albeit at a very unfashionable hour, not only dressed, but on the point of sallying forth to take a ride in the Park.

"Servant, Major," said Mr. Isaaks, seating

himself and throwing his gloves very hard into the hat which he had placed between his feet :
“ sorry to detain you, — fine morning for a ride, — but just two minutes, if you please.”

Faulkland hesitated for a moment, then seated himself with an air of undisguised impatience.

“ Heard from the Governor lately ? ” inquired Mr. Isaaks, looking up — “ quite well, I hope ? ”

“ Well ? ” repeated the Major : “ yes, he is well, and ” — he appended a little wish, bearing some relation to the old gentleman’s eventual comfort.

“ Wonderful how marrying again agrees with some folks.”

Faulkland not caring either to admit or deny this important proposition, the Jew proceeded.
“ It is lucky he is well, as there is a little grain of difficulty arisen about that bond of his.”

“ The interest has been paid to the day, has it not ? ” asked the Major.

“ Oh, quite a pattern for punctuality — sharp to a second,” returned the other. “ It isn’t for that ; — no, bless you, the hitch hangs on the principal.”

The least possible change passed over Faulkland's countenance ;—it was gone in an instant ; but, slight as it was, it did not escape the keen eye of the wary Israelite.

“ Phoo ! ” said the Major, with a forced smile, “ the principal is safe enough ; old Broughton's name is good for ten times the sum.”

“ Ten times ten is a hundred — a hundred thousand !—Well, perhaps it is,” said Mr. Isaaks ; “ but how if he never happened to put his name to any such security ? ”

“ What bantering is this ? ” said Faulkland, haughtily.

“ Why, as you say, it is a joke,” replied Mr. Isaaks ; “ and an uncommon lively one too— a trifle too practical, perhaps, and it isn't easy to say where it may end.”

“ You forget yourself, sir,” said the Major, rising ; “ your pleasantry is past my comprehension.”

“ Hold ! ” said the Jew, placing himself before the door : “ in five words, that bond is a forgery, Major Faulkland — can you comprehend that ? ”

“ A forgery,” repeated the other, with all the

outward appearance of astonishment he could summon to his aid.

"A forgery — and you know it!" returned Isaaks coolly.

"'Tis false as hell!" exclaimed Faulkland. "I could swear to the signature among a thousand forgeries."

"Yes," answered the bailiff, "it *is* well done — devilish well done — it bit *me*, and there is but one man in England that can do that — how you got at him is no affair of mine."

"Villain — liar!" cried Faulkland; "you shall answer for this by all —"

"Come, come, Major, what is the use of swearing; as you won't take my word for it, you must just come to the office — your old room is disengaged, and a very little time — a month or so at most will bring us word from the old gentleman himself."

"And by what authority, sir, do you make this demand?" asked Faulkland.

The bailiff smiled — took a pinch of snuff, pointed to the corner of a leathern case emerging from his breast-pocket, and pushed his snuff-box

across to the Major. For a minute they regarded each other without speaking.

"In short, you are blown, Major," at length said Mr. Isaaks, breaking silence,—“one word from me and you hang like a dog!”

Faulkland made no reply, but opening a drawer in the table drew out a small pistol, and presenting it cocked at his companion, asked composedly, “And what is there to prevent my securing your silence for ever? — a touch of the finger does it, and a man may as well swing for murder as for forgery.”

Mr. Isaaks seemed to feel the full force of this argument; he turned pale and glanced rather uneasily towards the door.

“Stir and I pull,” said Faulkland, coolly.

“You admit the fact?” inquired Isaaks, doggedly.

“I admit nothing,” returned the Major; “but there,” he added, replacing the weapon in the spot whence he had taken it, “I can trust you — it is not your interest to betray me, or I would have put it beyond your power.”

“Why, as you say, I should be sorry to do

the ungenteel thing, or hurt the delicacy of a friend," returned the other.

"At the certain loss of ten thousand pounds," added the Major; "I believe you:—that document must be destroyed."

"And what security have I," asked the Jew, "that you will not fly the country?"

"The very best," answered Faulkland, "my interest forbids it;—name your price."

The Jew paused, and from the unconnected words that fell from him, such as "monies sunk"—"life insurance"—"compounding felony,"—seemed to be running over in his mind the items of a bill of costs.

At this moment the door was thrown violently open, and Mr. Robert Coryton, bearing a double sheet of the *Times* newspaper "displayed, proper," stumbled headlong into the apartment.

"It is all U P," he gasped, flourishing the paper, and staring alternately at Faulkland and his companion, "Fuimus Troes! and no mistake."

"The fool is mad," cried Faulkland, sternly.

"Or drunk," suggested Mr. Isaaks.

“ Drunk ! ” repeated the intruder ; “ no, by Mars, Bacchus, Apollo virorum !—No, never was anybody more sober in this world—not a hope, not a chance left though. Read that, or listen :—

“ ‘ At Florence, on the 8th of June, the lady of John Broughton, of Lindsay Court, in the county of Kent, Esquire, of a son and heir.’ ”

“ D—nation,” shouted Faulkland, springing from his seat, as the Jew darted forward at the same moment to secure his prey.

He was too late,—the table, purposely upset by the other, impeded his progress. Coryton, in his abrupt entrance, had left the room door open,—the key on the outside. Faulkland gained it,—passed it,—in an instant shot the bolt, and cut off pursuit.

“ HE HAS LOST THE GAME, BY HEAVEN ! ” said Mr. Bob Coryton.

THE RUBBER OF LIFE.

BY DALTON INGOLDSEY.

GAME THE LAST.

GAME THE LAST.

CHAPTER I.

Faintly as tolls the evening chime,
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time,
But when the wind blows off the shore,
Oh sweetly we'll rest our weary oar.

Row, brothers, row !

MOORE.

Duncan is in his grave :
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.
Treason has done its worst,—nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.

Macbeth.

THE PIC-NIC.—POETRY AND PIGEON PIE.—KEW-COMERS
AND CUCUMBERS.—NEWS FROM ABROAD.—DEATH AND
ABDUCTION.

“Tis he !—well met in any hour !”—exclaimed Mr. George Hazeldine, pulling up his cabriolet

sharp in the middle of Regent Street, to address Mr. Francis Sherborne; "come, scrape your boots, Frank, and jump in."

The diminutive tiger, to whom we have alluded in the earlier part of this voracious narrative, sprang to the rein. He was one of those gentlemen with whom, according to the poet, "Time stands still withal." Whether a copious administration of alcohol in early life had arrested Nature in her progress, as a dram of gin is used to stunt a puppy, or from whatever other cause it might proceed, the urchin, though so many months had flown over his head in the interval, seemed to be not an inch taller, nor an ounce heavier, than when we last parted with him.—

Frank, having complied with the directions given him, and assumed his seat, his "exquisite" friend thus continued — "That young rascal must carry more weight yet: when the mare throws her head up she lifts him, tops and all, completely off the ground; — but to business. — You know Miss Alleine?"

"I have seen her," replied Frank.

"Seen her!" muttered his companion; "one

would think you were talking of a coal mine, or Mount Vesuvius. Don't you admire her—adore her?"

"She is a very fine girl," replied Sherborne, with a smile; "but I know so little of her."

"You shall know more," interrupted Hazeldine: "I myself *do* admire her and adore her, and what proof do you suppose I have given of my adoration?"

"Proposed to her?" said Frank.

"Heaven forbid!" cried the other, with a slight start: "how coolly you utter that awful word! No,—I have not done that exactly; but I have, for her sweet sake, actually lent myself to a picnic party—you must support me through the perils of the day."

"I?—really, my dear George," returned Frank Sherborne, "it is impossible."

"Of course it is," said Mr. Hazeldine; "but though that is an objection, nevertheless and notwithstanding you must come—so listen—we embark from the lawn at Fulham,—row up to Pope's villa—or 'pull up,' I am told, is the proper term;—and there eat a great many pigeon

pics, and drink a great deal of champagne with the chill off."

"Ay, — without chairs or tables, and with a very limited supply of crockery—that, I believe, is what they call a pic-nic."

In his present frame of mind Frank had no great devotion to the deed, but Hazeldine, who really liked him, was urgent; so that, in fine, after a little more persuasion, the impossibility was bottled up for another occasion, and he consented to be called for on the following morning at "twelve precisely."

"One word," said Hazeldine, as they parted; —"you will pardon my alluding to it, but it is a point that might escape you:—we are all to be in pure whites—and if you could conveniently be uniform—"

"Well, well," replied Frank laughing, "*ubi plura nitent*, I will not prove one of the sombre spots—fare thee well."

A brilliant morning succeeded, the glass got up in a hurry just in time to save its credit, and everything portended a lovely day; cabmen were smoking the pipes of discontent, and their misc-

rable cattle prepared for a "whole holiday."—If any one animal enjoys a fine day more than another it must surely be a hackney-coach horse.

"Singular," said Frank, "a pic-nic and no rain!"

"By no means singular," returned Mr. Hazeldine, "it always used to rain on these occasions, I grant you, but as the man in the play says, '*nous avons changé tout cela*,'—it is low and common-place now."

A short drive brought the friends to the place of embarkation; it was one of those delightful lawns bordering on the Thames, in the immediate neighbourhood of Fulham. On their arrival a confused and distant din led them to that portion of the grounds where a party was already assembled by the water's edge.

"This is what I dreaded," said Hazeldine, pressing the arm of his friend, "those infernal fellows will talk so much."

The crowd, which at first resembled a huge unformed mass, now gradually resolved itself into the distinct persons of some ten or a dozen gentlemen, with ladies in the proportion of three

to two, and of every shape and size that female delicacy is wont to assume. Two large boats, well furnished with awnings and union-jacks, floated at their feet,—servants were busily engaged in storing away a respectable cargo of hampers, and notwithstanding the embarrassing aid of the more active gentlemen, succeeded at length in getting everything prepared for a start.

“ Now then,” exclaimed a stout individual in very tight trousers and lemon-kid gloves, who kindly took upon himself the responsibility of acting as admiral,—“ we are all here but Smithson Smith ;—as he has not thought proper to be in time, we must start without him.”

A warm discussion now ensued—all the mammas said all at once, that it was too bad to leave any young man behind,—it was so unkind, so selfish — so shocking ;—one middle-aged lady from Clapham Rise, said it was wicked !—The other party was more numerous and almost as energetic. Jupiter Picnickius held the fate of Smith in equal scales—the trembling balance, now this, now that way inclines — the contest rages with increasing violence, till a gentleman who, with

three others, had hitherto stood aloof and said nothing, briefly remarked, that "though they might be complacent enough to wait the convenience of Mr. Smith — the tide in all probability would not be so accommodating."

This decided the affair, Smith and his fortunes kicked the beam, and the embarkation commenced.

As the four reserved gentlemen, who were members of the Bellerophon Cutter Club, took possession of the benches of one of the boats, meaning glances passed between them,—short scientific remarks were uttered in a low tone on the length and poize of the oars, and mysterious allusions made to neap tides and other matters connected with the more recondite branches of Thames navigation.

Meanwhile Mr. Montgomery Brown, the stout captain of the other vessel, found a strange lack of able-bodied watermen ; he applied in the most respectful terms to Hazeldine for assistance : that gentleman, however, merely put up his glass and stared at him by way of reply.

"Come, then, Milkington, we must have you," said Mr. Brown.

A young man with a little round, bullet head and a face like a milliner's, replied as "gently as any sucking dove,"—"He'd rather not, he should prefer sitting with the ladies."

"What on earth shall we do?—Come, Black, there's a good fellow,—do come and give us the stroke."

Mr. Black rose, so did his three companions, and all with a simultaneous movement stepped into the adjoining boat. The ladies screamed in unanimity, and some of the gentlemen looked terrified.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Montgomery Brown in undisguised alarm, "what *are* you about? I only want one."

"We always pull together," mildly remarked Mr. Black.

"Then get back, in Heaven's name!" returned the other.

The "Bellerophons" resumed their places, and a Mr. Wadd, who "did not know whether he could row or not," was selected to fill the vacant seat.

"All right!—off she goes;—now pull away!"

cried Mr. Montgomery Brown ; “ time — time Number two ! — Wadd, my boy, you must really keep time.”

Wadd looked rather confused, turned very red, and began keeping it at such a remarkable rate as to drench completely, in a reasonable number of strokes, three-fourths of his party. The other boat meanwhile was pursuing its course prosperously ; Messrs. Black *et cetera*, bending to their oars as if the credit of the whole British navy, and particularly that portion of it known as the Bellerophon Cutter Club, depended upon their individual and combined exertions.

“ How tired you will be ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Alleine compassionately. Mr. Black shook his head, and redoubled his efforts, occasionally interchanging grim smiles with his friends as the distance between them and the opposition boat increased. But alas ! for the perishable nature of aquatic as well as earthly glory : — they had barely reached Kew Bridge, when they had the mortification of seeing their adversaries shoot by, attached to the stern of a Richmond steamer. A harp and clarionet at the same moment struck up

"The Lass I left behind me," and the "Belle-rophons" pursued the remainder of the voyage in melancholy silence.

Arrived at the poet's retreat, Mr. Montgomery Brown, who had placed himself in the bow for that express purpose, rose with a very long boat-hook in his hand ;—conscious of the dignity and importance of his post, and of the interest he thereby excited, he threw himself into the most approved seaman-like attitudes, and making various demonstrations with his weapon, as they drew near shore, finally fixed it with much grace in the toe of an astounded gardener who was waiting their arrival.

Notwithstanding this little *contre-temps*, the entire party was soon happily disposed beneath a tent erected for the occasion ; the band played "The Roast Beef of Old England," and nearly every description of eatables was produced, save and except the very roast beef in question, which, as a certain distinguished foreigner once observed, was by no means now the English dish, having long since abdicated in favour of "cock and bacon."

Everything now went on with much hilarity ; the usual witticisms were fired off, and received with a cordiality as great as if they were of the very latest invention, and especially manufactured for this identical occasion ; the wine was abundant, and the spirits were high. The Hon. Mr. and Misses Pinkelman, who had the *entrée* at Almacks', soon found themselves utterly unable to establish anything like moral awe ; their particular pies were seized, their individual champagne was violated, just as if they were mere common-place insignificant people, and not the Honourable Mr. and Misses Pinkelman, and had not the *entrée* at Almacks'.

" Delightful all this, isn't it?" said Mr. Montgomery Brown to a sentimental young lady on his arm ; " to wander along the classic shores once trodden by the material feet of the bards of other days, the Addisons, the Swifts, the Steeles, the Churchills, the Popes," and he ran through as much of the index of " Bell's British Poets," as his memory happened to supply. Various other gentlemen were already deep in the " Essay on Man," and the " Elegy to an

Unfortunate Young Lady," matters all properly prepared beforehand; and one young gentleman, still in a high state of perspiration, had put himself to the expense of getting up Sir John Denham's "Apostrophe to the Thames," and commenced—

"Oh could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My bright example, as it is my theme,—"

when Miss St. Simpkin, determined not to be outdone, rushed precipitately into

"Pity the sorrows of a poor old man!"

The lady from Clapham meanwhile was busily engaged in distributing among the gardener's boys Tracts on Temperance, and "Thirty Reasons against allowing hot dinners to servants on Sundays."

Dancing had hardly commenced in the long room, when no less a person than Mr. Smithson Smith himself made his appearance, and a very striking appearance it was: he had evidently been studying some T. P. Cooke-ry book, or "Every man his own Sailor," as was developed by the straw hat, round jacket, satin scarf, silk stockings, patent leather pumps, and silver buckles, with

which he was adorned, the most approved costume of an Amphitheatrical Tar. He entered the ball-room with a hand in each pocket, and humming the "Bay of Biscay O;" at length being pushed by one couple of waltzers against another couple, and thence "making a cannon," between Frank Sherborne and Miss Pinkelman, he found himself comfortably "pocketed" by the side of Mr. Alleine.

"Yo ho! what cheer, my dear Mr. Alleine?" cried the hyper-nautical gentleman, recovering himself. "Rather late, — thought I was drowned? — eh? but no, quite t'other thing:

' There's a sweet little cherub that sits up stairs,
That takes care of the life of poor Smith!'

Now I don't mind going the length of betting one sovereign to one shilling that you don't guess what has detained me after all."

Mr. Alleine was not to be tempted by the odds, and exhibited but little curiosity anent the subject of the proffered wager.

"The fact is then," continued Mr. Smith, "that mother and sisters have been going in and out of hysterics all the morning, so as to keep up a regular supply of warm water. I never

saw such fun ; and all because old Botherwig, or Broughton, or whatever his name is, has cut his final stick,—cut it uncommon suddenly too,—and now cousin Gertrude comes in for the jointure.”

“Gracious Heaven,—Mr. Broughton dead !” exclaimed Frank.

“Excessively dead, sir,” returned Mr. Smith ; “and what is more, he does not appear to have died with his own free will and consent. People hint that his soup one day had a very queer smell, and that the cook was ill for a week ; but that’s not the best of the joke.”—

Disgusted as Sherborne felt with the other’s heartlessness, he could not refrain from listening ; and Mr. Smith proceeded.

“No, by no means ; the unrivalled attraction is to come. The old gentleman, it seems, was hardly put out of the way, when one fine evening, as the widow, and her maid carrying the young heir, —quite an infant, you know,—were walking in the garden, out of the hedge jumps a man in a brown cloak, large boots, and a long beard, like ‘The Miller and his Men,’ and sings out in the very

choicest Italian, '*Corpo di Baccho!*'—which means, 'Devil take you all!—give me the baby!' The young woman screeches,—the baby squalls,—when luckily up comes one of their queer policemen, and off scampers the brigand, leaving as a memorial a stiletto, two feet long, sticking in the nursery maid's stays."

Frank had heard enough ; despairing of obtaining a more correct account of the attempted violence from this very pleasant young gentleman, he quietly withdrew from the party, and mounting a Twickenham stage, which happened fortunately to be just leaving the village, returned forthwith to his lonely home, there to reflect on the sad chance that had deprived him of another of the very few persons in the world whom he could call his friends.

CHAPTER II.

But I, whom griping penury surrounds,
 And hunger, sure attendant upon want,
 With scanty offals and small acid tiff,
 (Wretched repast!) my meagre corse sustain :
 Then solitary walk, or doze at home
 In garret vile, and with a warming puff
 Regale chill'd fingers.—*Splendid Shilling.*

POVERTY TO THE DOOR, LOVE TO THE WINDOW.—EX NIHIL
 NIHIL FIT.—THE TEMPTER RETURNED.—HESITATION, DE-
 CLARATION, AND ACCEPTATION.—AN ASSIGNATION.

IT is a singular circumstance connected with the temporal prosperity of weekly lodgers, that in proportion as their pecuniary resources sink in the scale, they themselves rise to a more elevated situation. Their persons, lightened of all superfluous metal, acquire, it is to be presumed, a buoyancy resembling that noticed by philosophers

in the human mind when freed from the oppressive influence of superincumbent meat and bottled porter. Mr. Robert Coryton afforded a very complete example of this sort of personal elasticity; and having passed in succession through every story of a tall, thin house, was now at length brought into the closest possible approximation to the roof-tree, and pleasantly domiciled in what vulgar people are apt to denominate "the garret."

"Mary Anne, my dear," he inquired timidly of the lady, who might with difficulty have been recognised as the same who had heretofore presided at his hospitable board when it was groaning beneath mighty bowls of punch,—“May I venture to ask, my love, if we are to have the pleasure of each other's company at dinner to-day?”

“If you can earn one,” was the brief reply.

The prospect thus conditionally held out did not seem to affect Mr. Coryton with the liveliest satisfaction.

“Consider, my love,” he began again in a deprecating tone.

"I have considered," returned the lady; "I have considered that I have parted with every thing—almost to the very clothes on my back—to keep you from starving; while you will not move a finger to support yourself; but sit idle there, pretending to expect remittances from that precious Major. I *have* considered, sir; and the conclusion which I have come to is, that you don't get another penny from me."

"Upon my honour," commenced the gentleman—

"You may dine upon your honour," interrupted his companion.

Now, admitting that honour not only *could* set a leg, but could provide and roast one also, it might even under such favourable supposition seem a little questionable how far Mr. Robert Coryton would have benefited thereby.

After a silence which lasted for some time, he thrust his hands into the very bottom of his coat pockets, and giving a slight preliminary hem, observed, with a little hesitation of manner, that he thought there was a little trinket—a gold watch, a pledge of love in happier days—which might on

such an emergency be advantageously exchanged for a reasonable supply of cold meat and pickles.

"It is gone ;—you know it is," replied Mary Anne ; "it barely paid our rent."

Mr. Coryton withdrew one of his hands from his coat pocket, and feigned to employ it, as well as his eyes, in the arrangement of a very dirty shirt frill.

"Ah, I remember," he said musingly,— "Rent, not Time, is your regular *edax rerum*.—Let me see ;—is there nothing else ?—no ring ?—no.—By the bye, what have you done with the little pearl locket ?"

"Would you have me sell that ?" exclaimed the lady in a reproachful tone, fixing her eyes upon the somewhat embarrassed countenance of Mr. Robert.

"Why, really," returned the latter, "did I see any alternative—but, as the poet says, '*Est natura hominum, pickles et roast beef avida*,'—which means, my dear, 'man must have meat ;' and my man,—my inward man,—has not taken any for four-and-twenty hours at least."

"Then take it," cried his companion, tearing

the article in question from her neck, and dashing it violently upon the table. "I was a fool for ever placing it there."

Mr. Coryton's rejoinder was cut short by a distinct single rap at the door. "Come in," he said, desperately. "Devil or dun, it don't much matter which — but Old Nick for choice."

A dirty little boy entered; the fond couple were evidently much relieved at his appearance, unengaging though it was. "Well, my trump," asked Mr. Coryton, "what do you want?"

"Here's a letter," said the boy, tossing one down upon the table.

Coryton hastily broke the seal — read it, and read it again. "That will do, my boy,—there's no answer," he said, after his second perusal.

"Nuffin' for bringing it?" inquired the messenger.

"Nuffin'," replied Mr. Coryton, with great solemnity.

"Scaly!" muttered the boy.

"What's that you said, sir?" said the gentleman.

"I said '*scaly*,'—that's wot I said," re-

turned the other, sulkily, as he descended the stairs, testifying the state of his feelings by kicking down every article of domestic use that he happened to light upon in his progress.

The lady now took up the note and read as follows : —

“ Come to me instantly — you will find me in the travellers’ room at the Bricklayers’ Arms, — be cautious and speedy. Yours,

“ F.”

“ You pore over it as if it were a love letter,” said Coryton, with something as closely approaching a sneer as he dared hazard. “ You know the hand, I suppose ? ”

“ Too well — too well ! ” returned his companion ; then added, musingly, “ What can be his object ? Some new devilry is afoot, or he would never have risked a return. Robert, beware of that man ; — I know him, and I warn you. He will make a tool of you, and then sacrifice you without a scruple. I dread him ; and if you have any love left for me, Robert,

you will not obey this summons. I will work for you—slave for you—so you only keep clear of him.”

“ You are a good girl, Moggy, after all,” said Mr. Coryton. “ We won’t part with the locket ; but I must meet him, if but for a few minutes.”

“ He has some desperate game to play,” urged his companion, “ or he would never have ventured back to England. Oh, dear Robert, for my sake, quit him,—quit him and his plots for ever.”

Mr. Coryton replied with a rather vague and intangible promise of “ seeing about it.” “ Meanwhile,” he continued, “ there can be no harm in just learning what this desperate game, that so disturbs your nervous system, may be. I need not take a hand unless I like.”

Thus saying, with a gallantry which had long ceased to be usual in him, he bestowed a kiss upon the cheek of the distressed fair ; then, having brushed his hat with a cotton pocket-handkerchief, and put on the best glove of a shrunk and faded pair, swinging the more “ seedy”

one by the forefinger, he shouldered a six-penny walking-stick, and took his leave.

* * * * *

One morning, a few days after the water-party, George Hazeldine entered Sherborne's chambers ; his habitually dignified composure was on this occasion slightly deranged—very slightly so,—but an eye less observant than that of Frank would nevertheless have detected that something of extraordinary interest occupied his thoughts.

Having made many very earnest and particular inquiries as to the exact state of his friend's health, he paused for some moments.

" Frank," said he at length, with an air of affected carelessness, " you never told me after all what you thought of that little girl, Grace Alleine,—let me have your candid opinion of her."

" Why," said Frank, in a corresponding tone, " she is dull, stupid "—

" No, no," interrupted George, " not dull,—rather reserved, perhaps, before strangers. She is not the worse for that."

"Then as for her figure," continued Sherborne, with a slight yawn, "it's decidedly dumpy."

"Dumpy!" exclaimed his friend, with energy. "What the devil do you call dumpy?—She's above the middle height: oh! d—n it, call her anything but dumpy."

"I may be mistaken," returned Sherborne; "it is her rotundity, perhaps, that gives her that appearance."

"Fat!" cried Hazeldine, in horror. "Heaven and earth!—Grace Alleine fat! Come, come,—no nonsense: say honestly what you think of her."

"Well then, honestly," replied the other, "I think her a very handsome girl, and a young lady in every respect qualified to make an excellent wife for one George Hazeldine, esquire, of the Middle Temple, barrister at law. Is it not to be so?"

"That is precisely the point I want to ascertain," answered the latter. "To confess the truth, I have said too little or too much. It was all that infernal pic-nic—the champagne

and the moon ;—moons certainly are the most dangerous things in the universe for bachelors with moderate expectations :—before I was aware of it, I discovered myself talking about Tom Moore, and two souls that are joined in one heavenly tie,—with brow never changing,—and all that sort of thing.”

“ And with what result ? ” asked Sherborne.

“ Why,” replied his friend, “ the young lady said it must be uncommonly pleasant, — and wondered whether two souls ever were so joined ; in short,—she did not jump into my arms or go off in a fit, or do anything outrageous, — but she smiled a good deal, and exhibited as much anxiety for the experiment as any lady of average delicacy could well have done. So prepare yourself, and we will drive down to Fulham at once, where you shall see me make a surrender in form of a very tolerable person, five-hundred a-year, and the aforesaid moderate expectations.”

Sherborne accepted the invitation with willingness, and they were proceeding at a quick rate in the direction of Piccadilly, when a man, wrapped in a sailor’s rough jacket, crossed im-

mediately before them, and dived into a narrow alley on the right.

"I have seen that man before," said Frank. "Stay," he added suddenly; "by Heaven, it is Faulkland!—Pull up, my dear George, I must pursue him instantly."

"Indeed you will do no such thing," quietly returned Hazeldine, touching his horse gently with the whip. "Major Faulkland?—pooh! impossible! If, as Isaaks tells you, warrants are out against him for forgery, rely upon it, he knows better than to 'show' on this side of the Atlantic."

"I'll swear to his person," returned Frank; "no disguise can deceive me. He must be followed."

"It is useless now," urged the other; "if it be really he, set the Jew upon his trail; he will hunt him down like a bloodhound."

After a little consideration, Frank deemed it the more prudent course to comply with this advice; and Hazeldine, in order to change the subject, commenced an account of all the various and conflicting opinions, statements, and reflec-

tions, upon, and in connexion with, the pic-nic, which, besides its general *agrémens*, had been attended with such important results to himself.

“ You astonish me,” cried Frank, at last ; “ I, in my simplicity, believed that they all enjoyed the day beyond measure.”

“ So did they,” pursued his informant ; “ they all believed so too, at the time, and it was not till the next morning that the mistake was discovered, and they began to perceive how very miserable they all had been. The Pinkelmans declared they would have preferred taking their *déjeuner* with the beasts in the Zoological Gardens, either Surrey or Middlesex,—they didn’t care which.—Mrs. Barton maintains, that that prim Mrs. St. Simpkin and her affected daughters are sufficient to cast a damp chill over even a water party, and she intends to have a *select* thing of the sort herself at the Beulah Spa.—Mrs. St. Simpkin, on the other hand, vows that nothing can be so odious as romping ladies of a certain age ; and that she is determined to have a *select* thing at Richmond ;—while Mrs. Alleine declares that altogether the party was of too mixed a character,

and that she purposes giving a *very select* thing on the lawn at Fulham.

“Then Mr. Smithson Smith confidentially informed me that on the next occasion he should bring with him some *select* “jolly cocks” — I think he called them — who *would* smoke, let the ladies look as black as his boots.

“As for the girls, some were offended at being kissed in the grotto — some were still more angry at not being kissed in the grotto ; and all agree that the aforesaid kissing was conducted upon very false and unsatisfactory principles.—

“But here we are at our journey’s end ; ring the bell ; — domestic drama of thrilling interest about to commence.”

Mr. Hazeldine’s self-possession had by this time quite returned, and in the interview which followed he appeared the only person wholly at his ease. Frank naturally felt a little awkward, particularly when George, taking the elder lady’s arm, led her away to a retired quarter of the gardens, and left to himself the task of entertaining Miss Grace ; and a task it was, for the young lady, instead of aiding and abetting con-

versation, gave such answers as she gave at all in so very low a tone, and in so random a manner, as to render it difficult to connect them in any way with the observations offered. Frank, therefore, felt considerable relief on at length perceiving the approach of the other couple; the more so as from the radiant expression of the mamma it was quite clear that matters were happily adjusted.

George himself appeared perfectly unmoved, and exchanged partners with Sherborne as gravely as he would have done snuff-boxes.

The latter was now preparing to depart, but at the combined entreaties of his friend and Mr. Alleine, for whose express benefit it seemed he had been provided, he was at length prevailed upon to stay and make a fourth at their dinner-table. It did not prove to him the most lively evening in the world: luckily, however, he had little to do but to sit in a very easy chair, and nod in the proportion of about two nods to three minutes; while the gratified hostess, whose demeanour resembled that of a clucking hen, relieved him from all further anxiety, by keeping

the subject of discussion entirely in her own hands.

In due time Mr. Hazeldine thought it right to retire.—Poor Frank had been thinking the same for some two hours and a half before,—and they set out accordingly. On returning to his chambers, Sherborne was in the act of applying a latch-key, when, much to his surprise, the door was opened from within by his elderly house-keeper.

Mrs. Perkins received him with an austerity of aspect seldom seen upon her usually placid countenance ; and, without deigning a reply to any inquiries as to her unusual vigils, preceded him to his sitting-room.

Lighting the candles on the table, she snuffed them with most accurate precision : then, turning to him whom she by courtesy termed her master, said with much bitterness,

“ You keep very nice company, sir ; very nice company, indeed ! ”

Frank replied only by an interrogative look, not being able to divine which it was of his few acquaintances who merited that particular epithet.

"Ay, you may well be ashamed of it," continued the old lady; "I don't wonder at your pretending ignorance. There has been a female creature here, sir, — a positive female creature, — running after you all the evening."

"A woman!" said Frank, in increased perplexity; "and want me!"

"Yes, sir; a woman, and want you!" repeated the domestic; "and as she couldn't get what she wanted, she has left that nice,—pretty,—delicate epistle."

Thus saying, Mrs. Perkins, with an expression of super-feminine abhorrence, cast down upon the table a dirty playing-card, on the back of which were inscribed the following lines:—

"If Mr. Francis Sherborne still retains any regard for a family once dear to him, he will meet the writer at nine to-morrow morning on the eastern side of Soho Square. She has that to communicate which concerns their welfare deeply."

"A family once dear to him!" — Their "welfare implicated?" — What family? — The

Broughtons?—Clara? — It must be so!—It *was* Faulkland, then, whom he had caught sight of, and their peace was again menaced — he retired to bed, though not to rest, and never once thought of the half-petrified Perkins.

CHAPTER III.

Hubert, throw thine eye
On yon young boy ;—I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way,
And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread
He lies before me.

KING JOHN.

THE RENDEZVOUS.—A LITERARY SEJOUR.—SOMETHING BEYOND A JOKE.—SYMPTOMS OF GIBBING.—MONEY MAKES THE MARE TO GO.—THE BARGAIN.—DONE AND DONE IS ENOUGH BETWEEN GENTLEMEN.

MR. ROBERT CORYTON, as much from habit as precaution, selected the most unfrequented streets in his progress towards the Bricklayers' Arms. Neither inclination nor business had of late led him much abroad during the day; and his costume, just now, was more particularly adapted to a very select evening party than a

morning's stroll down Regent Street, and to say the truth, like many professed beauties, he generally looked best by candle-light.

It was nearly dark, when, having crossed quietly over London Bridge, and made his way through that then most detestable of thoroughfares, Kent Street, he arrived at the noisy, busy spot, to which he had been summoned; and the door of which was yet besieged by a crowd of ostlers, porters, Jews, and idlers.

Elbowing his way through these, he entered a room on the right, known in the establishment as "the parlour."

A stout waiter in slippers, with short black shining hair, was earnestly engaged in rubbing down one of the tables; and vainly endeavouring to efface certain circular marks on the mahogany (?) which obstinately defied his efforts, and spoke of ale in grain; the sides of several others were occupied by men, the greater part of whom had tumblers of brandy and water by their side, and limp, stained, copies of the morning papers in their hands.

One individual, apparently a seafaring man,

wrapped in a large rough pilot-coat, sat apart from the rest, and was attentively busied in examining a map spread out before him. Upon this person Mr. Coryton, having sufficiently studied the countenances of the others, at length fixed his eyes; but the stranger's face was so shaded, and so essentially changed since Coryton had last had the pleasure of seeing it, that he was some time before he succeeded in tracing in it the features of his old friend and patron, Major Faulkland.

Their eyes at length met,—the recognition was mutual, and the new-comer, with an air of affected indifference, took a seat near him whom he had come to see, and commenced the conversation.

After commenting upon his delay, which Mr. Coryton excused upon the plea of having to dress previous to leaving home, the Major rose, and, hinting that the place they were then in was too public for the communications he had to make, bade his friend conduct him to some more retired spot.

Mr. Coryton acknowledged this admission of his own superior attainments in topography with

a patronizing wink, and bent his way accordingly down the Kent Road ; then, turning up one of the narrow lanes on the left, entered at length the door of a low, dirty-looking public-house, and called " Jem ! "

A tall, brawny, prize-fighting sort of man, in top-boots, replied to the summons.

" The ' library ' disengaged ? " asked the former.

The man nodded.

" Beef-steaks and onions for three," rejoined Mr. Coryton gravely ; " and a bottle of your very best port."

Thus saying he led the way up a mysterious-looking staircase, and through a room having a sanded floor, and hung with portraits of race-horses and eminent members of the P. C. into a small adjoining closet, capable, perhaps, of holding four or five persons, and cut off by double doors from the public apartment. A cribbage-board, and some dirty packs of cards on the mantelpiece, showed to what department of literature the " library " was more especially devoted.

Faulkland looked on in silence, while his companion was engaged in discussing the treble commons he had ordered.

"And now," inquired that gentleman, after a draught of porter,

"Deep as the rolling Zuyder Zee,"

"now for the communications. But first, pray what on earth is it that can bring you so remarkably near the Old Bailey? I thought you were making the grand tour in America, or Timbuctoo."

"I am here, as you see," returned Faulkland; "and have come with the determination to make one last desperate push for the stake we have been playing for so long."

"I am engaged in a precisely similar pursuit," interrupted Mr. Coryton, with a glance of great satisfaction at the dish before him, on which a few fragments—

"The poor remains of beauty once admired,"

yet lingered, awaiting in their turn the devouring jaws of the ogre.

"All may yet be retrieved," pursued the

Major; "the fortune may yet be won.—Are you disposed to make your own by a single bold stroke?"

Coryton laid down his knife and fork, and, resting his chin upon his hands, replied, after a few moments' deliberation,—

"Why, of course, abstractedly speaking, I am remarkably so disposed: but, looking at the matter concretely, or with reference to this particular and individual case, I am afraid the stroke in question may be a *leetle* too bold to suit my book.—Take my advice, Major, and don't try it.—Give in, and evaporate while you can. If Isaaks gets wind of your arrival in England, you'll hang as high as—" The name of the individual usually quoted as an example of extremely elevated suspension escaped Mr. Coryton's memory,—so he finished his simile with the word "Blazes."

"Fool!—Coward!" returned Faulkland; "the prize, for which I have plotted, have risked all, and spent all, is within my reach; it only needs a cool heart and a steady hand to grasp it.—Is this a time to cry craven?"

Mr. Coryton made no reply. His companion continued :

“ As for Isaaks, nothing need be apprehended from him ; ten or twelve thousand pounds is too high a price for him to pay for the mere gratification of seeing me swing. But to my plan ;— may I trust you ? ”

“ Oh ! honour bright ! ” returned the other, touching the upper part of his waistcoat lightly with the knife-handle.

“ You have heard of old Broughton’s death ? ” pursued the Major.

“ I have,” said Coryton, gravely fixing his eyes upon the Major as he did so ; “ and I have heard it hinted that some helping hand lent him a lift upon his journey.—Soup and arsenic are alluded to.—Has such a report reached you ? ”

A slight flush passed over Faulkland’s countenance ; but he made no answer.

“ People talk, too,” continued the other, after a pause, “ of a ferocious attempt upon the life of his child.”

“ Had the cowardly hound that made it possessed but half the nerve his tribe are famed for,

that brat had no longer stood between me and fortune; — but no matter—Coryton, that child must be removed !”

“ Upon my soul ! I guessed as much,” exclaimed Mr. Robert, slapping his knee.

“ It is my last chance,” interposed the Major eagerly. “ Hell itself must be stirred to accomplish it :— say you join me.”

Mr. Coryton appeared a little confused by the suddenness of the demand ; and having swallowed nearly half a pint of brandy and water, by way of allaying the fluttering it had produced, replied at length with some hesitation,

“ Why, deuce take it ! Major, you know I am not remarkable for standing on ceremony ; and, as far as a quiet case of kidnapping goes, though I never did try, yet I think I might be induced,—for the sake of obliging a friend. As for anything in the cutting and maiming line, I can’t stand up to it,—it is ungentlemanlike.”

“ Leave all that to me,” said Faulkland, “ and listen to my plan. Jenkins, the Broughtons’ confidential servant, still remains faithful to me : through him I have intelligence of all their

movements. His last dispatch informs me that the young widow, and my wife, frightened by this cursed failure of the attack upon the child, have placed themselves under the escort of Sir Thomas Gordon, the British Envoy, who, with his family, is even now on his return to England. They proceed *viâ* Paris, thence to Boulogne or Calais, and across to Dovor; from which place Lindsay Court is distant but some ten or a dozen miles, and then do they take leave of their *compagnons du voyage*.

“It will be Jenkins’ business to delay their journey on till as late an hour as possible. The road is lonely, and one spot, especially, is admirably fitted for our design: here we must plant ourselves, and arrest the triumphal progress of the heir.—Twist the bantling’s neck, or kidnap him, which you will. I care not, so that he is once fairly out of my way.—Our retreat to the coast is easy; and a smuggler’s lugger is lying off Folkestone, ready to put to sea, at my command, at a moment’s notice. Every chance has been calculated. I have but need of one faithful friend, and the game is my own,—will you be that friend?”

Mr. Coryton looked exceedingly perplexed ; perhaps he had never felt more so in the whole course of his life. Perfect as this gentleman's character might be considered for the most part, it yet possessed some few weak points ;—not that personal cowardice was one of them, but a rather too profound respect for the opinions of the lady known by the affectionate diminutive “ Moggy ;” and, above all, his great dislike of proceeding to extreme measures,—such as twisting “ a bantling's” neck,—might be ranked among the number. He gave no answer, but made another serious application to the “ Oracle of the bottle.”

“ Speak !” said Faulkland, in an imperative tone.

“ Oh ! it is all very easy to sit there and say ‘ Speak !’ ” rejoined his companion, with an air of infirm indecision ; but hang me if I know what to say. I certainly don't set any extravagant value upon my agreeable person, and I have pulled a trigger or two in my time,—but then it was at a man, and he pulled at me again :—now, if I have a prejudice against any one thing more than another, it is babycide.—Get Dixon

to back you,—or the German :—either of them would kill him first and eat him afterwards—at so much a pound.”

The Major bit his lips, and turned deadly pale.

“ Robert Coryton,” said he at length, in a forced and unnaturally calm tone,—“ it is sufficient for me to observe that I did not expect this squeamishness on your part !—Now, mark me,” he added, after a pause, fixing his cold grey eyes upon the countenance of his uneasy companion ; “ you join me in this, and receive, in the event of our success, a handsome annuity during the remainder of your life, or you quit this country a convicted felon within three months from this present hour.—You are in my power, and you know it.—Make your choice, and make it quickly !”

“ Well,” said Coryton, a little sulkily ; “ if I must, I must. I am not the man to desert his friend at a pinch ; but I should really esteem it a personal favour if you would content yourself with bagging the little one, and turning it out in some foreign land.”

“ We can settle the details at our leisure,” returned the other, evasively. “ Meanwhile, you will need some preparation for the journey — do you require money ? ”

Mr. Coryton intimated that the balance in his banker’s hands was, at that particular time, unusually small ; so small, indeed, as to be scarcely worth mentioning.

The Major drew from his pocket-book a couple of ten-pound notes.

“ I can ill,” said he, “ spare even thus much. Join me, however, heart and hand, and as many of them as you can wish shall be at your disposal.”

All doubts and compunction were dispelled in an instant from Mr. Coryton’s mind, at the sight of what he called “ the stumpy ; ” — the combined influence of the brandy-bottle and the Major’s more potent reasoning was as nothing compared with the effect of those slight pieces of paper.

“ Done ! ” cried Coryton, thrusting them into his pocket, and at the same time grasping his tempter’s hand. — “ Done. — I succumb to the *es in presenti !* ”

“ We must travel on horseback,” pursued Faulkland. “ I will secure nags and weapons.— And now,—fare thee well!—Be true and secret! —above all, be ready to mount at a moment’s notice!”

His companion promised obedience, and once more summoning Jem, referred him, by a significant look to the Major, and led the way out of the house.

“ Here then we part,” said the latter, when they had reached the end of the lane where it debouched into the high Dovor road ; “ and remember on no pretence to quit your lodgings for so much as an instant till you hear from me.”

Coryton nodded assent, and, leaving the open streets for the choice of his friend, again selected a dark alley for his own path, as being more in unison with his convenience and the grave nature of his present reflections.

CHAPTER IV.

Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die.

* * * * *
A horse ! a horse ! a kingdom for a horse !

RICHARD III.

PERAMBULATION AND MEDITATION.—AULD LANG SYNE.—
COUNTER-APPEAL FROM “PHILIP SOBER” TO “PHILIP
DRUNK.”—THE CAT LET OUT OF THE BAG.—A WARNING.
—A VISIT,—AN ARREST,—AN ESCAPE,—AND AN AP-
POINTMENT.

MR. CORYTON pursued his way slowly home-
wards.—For some reason which it were unprofit-
able to dive into,—perhaps from an abstract love
of variety in his walks,—that gentleman was
rarely in the habit of returning by the same route
as that which he adopted in setting forth.

He now pursued a south-westerly direction, and
crossing St. George's Fields made towards the
river.—

On gaining Waterloo Bridge, now nearly deserted by passengers, he turned, almost unconsciously, into one of its recesses ; and, leaning his arm upon the parapet, gazed on the dark rolling tide below.

Lights from the opposite shores and neighbouring bridges were glancing upon the waters, while the furnace of some distant foundry threw its dull red glare across, rendering yet more gloomy the shapeless lines of craft that were moored along the banks and in mid-tide. Occasionally some wherry shot steadily from beneath the arch, or, urged by unskilful hands, crashed with frightful rapidity against the massive buttresses.

Strange sensations began to spring up in Mr. Coryton's heart as he stood silent and alone by that too frequent grave of crime and misery :—he had himself known more than one whose career had ended here, and he began to wonder what their sensations must have been when they looked, as he was now looking, into the cold stream below ;—how they might have felt at the instant when their grasp was first loosened past reco-

very,—and what wild maddening thoughts whirled through their brain in the swift moment of descent;—then the sullen plunge, and the floating shattered corpse !

Mr. Coryton pondered on these matters : not that he had the remotest idea of making any personal experiment on their nature ; on the contrary, he gazed down on the abyss with anything but “an awful wish to plunge within it.” Yet the scene lent some force to the gust of feeling that came over even him. He would have stripped the reckless prodigal of his last shilling without remorse ; and would have seen by the papers next day, with most unmoved philosophy, that the son, the husband, or the father, ruined, and robbed of all by his villany, had taken that fearful leap from the spot on which he was now standing. — That was professional, — all in the regular way of business. — He would not have quaffed his wine with one grain the less relish, because he had left the lips that had so often pledged him in it, cold and stiff upon the turf ; — that was gentlemanly and honourable.

But there was a something in butchering a

child that jarred upon some yet unseared nerve, —he knew it, he felt it to be a weakness, but for a single moment he yielded to it. A tear even stood in his eye as he thought on the devoted infant, and he sought his handkerchief;— in its stead he grasped the refreshers furnished by the Major:—they answered the purpose equally well, his mind resumed its usual equanimity, and Coryton returned to his lodgings with a breast comparatively tranquil, and perfectly resigned to the part he had engaged to take in the forthcoming enterprise.

During the whole of that night and the succeeding day Mr. Coryton preserved his secret safe within his own proper breast. He met the repeated interrogations of Mary Anne—no longer Moggy — with a sullen doggedness, occasionally relieved by oaths and imprecations. The neighbouring clock of St. Giles was heard to strike half-past seven; Mr. Coryton sent her out for a bottle of brandy.

We are informed such was the caution of the ancient Scythians, that they rarely engaged in any affair of moment without having previously

deliberated upon it in a state of drunkenness as well as of sobriety. The Shandean philosophy points out another but analogous and truly Aristotelian method of arriving at the *mesotē* of vigour, by rendering the student conversant with its hyperbole and ellipsis.

How far Mr. Coryton was acquainted with these subtleties does not appear, but having experienced the pains of temperance for nearly three entire days, he now deemed it due and fitting time to verge towards the opposite extreme; and that the more readily, inasmuch as he trusted a certain project, which still struck him as a repulsive one, might assume a more enlivening and agreeable aspect when seen through the medium of brandy and water: accordingly glass after glass of this pleasing compound disappeared with all reasonable celerity; and still there came, like Banquo's kings, "another yet," to keep up the succession.

Under the increasing influence of the jolly god by whom secrets of every kind are held in the greatest aversion, Mr. Coryton's imposed reserve gradually wore off, and his oratorical talents began to develop themselves in a flood of eulogy

bearing upon "Trumps" in general ; among the most "regular" of whom he classed Major Faulkland, and even further dignified him with the less known but not less laudatory appellation of a "Brick" and a "Bean."

Meanwhile his companion watched her opportunity, and on Robert's declaring, at length, with pride and admiration that he believed the aforesaid "Brick" and "Bean" to be the most "Whole-hog"-ian rascal the age had produced, she questioned him so closely upon the nature of the Major's merits, that he was morally compelled to unfold the plot they had arranged in concert, in order to sustain his extravagant commendation.

"So ! then," exclaimed the lady, grasping tightly the arm of her now nearly inebriated companion ; "satiated with common crimes, and to shut out every hope of pardon, from God or man, he is bent on murder !—Robert, you must have no hand in this ;—nay more, this foul deed must not be done, and you—you must avert it !"

"I !" retorted Coryton, in a tone of grave reproof : "you forget, my love, —I don't belong to

myself any longer,—I am bought — sold at the rate of ten pounds a yard, and see, my darling, here is the money.”

So saying, he pushed some sovereigns and a bank note across the table.

“That bargain must be broken,” replied the female resolutely. “By Heaven ! steeped as you are in sin, rather than you shall load your guilty soul with such a crime as this, I will myself denounce you both to the police.”

“What !” stammered Coryton, with a fearful oath, “what does the girl mean ? If I thought,” he added, looking round as if for some weapon, “you dared split, woman though you are, I’d find means to stay your tongue !”

“Spare your threats,” cried the other, starting to her feet, her face flushed, her outstretched arm trembling with excitement, and her dark eyes flashing fire,—“spare your threats, Robert,—seek not to terrify me, or you will raise a fiend that will crush you like a worm beneath the heel ! —Be warned in time, Robert ;—again I say, be warned, this foul deed of blood must not—shall not be perpetrated !”

Her companion opened his mouth and eyes, and sunk back in his chair in intense astonishment, not wholly unmixed with alarm.

"Oh, Robert," she pursued, in a gentler tone, and suffering her hand to drop upon the shoulder of the half-intoxicated man; "pause—reflect. Does not memory call up *one* pale plaintive face to plead for mercy?—do you not remember?"

"Oh, of course I do," interrupted Coryton, peevishly, but with an evident desire to evade certain disagreeable mental twinges. "Everybody remembers—I remember. I was once a little boy myself—'*puer ingenui vultus, ingenuique pudoris.*'"

Seeing that she had succeeded in making some impression, though he endeavoured to disguise it, Marian continued: "Can you think on that day of misery that left us childless? and can you—dare you—strike another so?"

"D—n it, girl, no snivelling!" returned Coryton fiercely, and moving uneasily in his chair. "After all, the boy may not be hurt—just sent abroad, perhaps, to pick up a profession."

"May not be hurt?" repeated the woman, bit-

terly,—“ *may* not be hurt, and in Faulkland’s power? Is the dove hurt in the talons of the eagle, or the hind quivering in the tiger’s jaw? —Think of that child’s mother, Robert! —think how we felt when looking for the last time on the calm and peaceful form of our own lost one as it lay in its little bed! —and think how we *should* have felt had his tender limbs been gashed and mangled before our eyes! — Beware a mother’s curse, —a deep, a damning, eternal curse!”

As Marian uttered these last words her whole figure dilated, and her eyes seemed to blaze with a light almost supernatural.

Robert sprang from his chair—he paused a moment; then, striking his clenched fist against his flushed brow, sank down and buried his face in his hands. A change seemed to have come over him; —the swollen veins in his temples, his heaving heart, and deep sobs, betraying the almost maddening agony that raged in his brain, fevered as it was from the combined effects of intoxication, remorse, and despair.

“ Mercy—mercy!” he cried; “ speak not of

him—he is gone whither I can never follow—gone from me for ever—for ever !”

“ Show mercy,” returned his companion, pressing her once smooth cheek, now furrowed, but not with age, to his ; “ spare one as young, as fair, as innocent ! ”

“ It cannot be,—it cannot be!—how can I save it?—what am I to do ?” muttered the other, raising his head, and gazing with a helpless, half-idiotic stare upon the fire. “ Faulkland has sworn to kill — how can I preserve it ? ”

“ Say but the word,” cried Marian, “ a word which will shine as one bright star in a dark and gloomy night — and leave the rest to me.”

“ Do with me as you please—as you please,” said Coryton, now reduced, by excessive excitement, to a state of drivelling imbecility ; “ I have no power ; you must act—do all.”

Marian seized a pen ; and on the back of a soiled card, the readiest and perhaps the only substitute for Bath post which the chamber afforded,—inscribed the lines that had so perplexed Frank Sherborne on his return to his chambers ; then, not daring to trust its delivery to another,

she snatched up her bonnet, threw a cloak that, like its owner, had seen better days, about her, and hurried off in person to the Temple.

A quarter of an hour had barely elapsed from the time of her departure, when Faulkland himself, booted and spurred as for a journey, hastily entered the apartment which she had so lately quitted.

Advancing gaily towards the half-stupified Coryton, he shook him by the shoulder.

"Up!" he exclaimed; "arouse thee, my honest Rob.!—the time has come—slowly, indeed, but yet, ere I could have hoped it,—our horses are below. We mount at once—the turning of the die to-morrow makes or mars us."

"*Aut Caesar aut nullus*," responded Mr. Coryton, with a highly creditable attempt at gravity.

The Major ran on: "To-morrow morning Clara and Mrs. Broughton, with the young heir, start from Boulogne; the packet cannot reach England before the afternoon. Some hours must elapse ere the party can quit Dover for Lindsay Court; and one of them at least must never reach it—must never cross the threshold of his father's

hall — must never hear the bells peal merrily his welcome home! — Black Robin's Corner is our rendezvous ; — all is prepared, bold hearts await us ; — the moon is up ; so to spur and snaffle, my gallant Rob."

" Oh, certainly, — of course, — if you wish it," replied the particularly gallant gentleman thus addressed, with great deliberation, but without betraying the least inclination to quit the arm-chair in which he was enthroned.

" Quick — quick !" cried Faulkland, impatiently, " the field of fortune lies before us — hell itself can hardly baulk us now."

" Surrender, in the King's name !" at this moment exclaimed a voice of thunder ; the door was burst open, and Isaaks, accompanied by a powerful auxiliary, rushed into the apartment.

" Treachery, by hell !" cried the Major. " Strike, Coryton, if you are a man !" so saying he discharged a heavy candlestick, with a sure aim, at the head of the officer in the rear.

" Yield !" cried the Jew, presenting a pistol.

With a blow, swift as thought, the Major dashed it from his hand — then springing at his

throat, seized him with a giant's grasp, and by dint of sheer strength, forcing him backwards to the stairs, paused for a moment,—clenched his teeth,—strung every nerve for one tremendous effort, and hurled him down the descent.

The Jew fell stunned upon the landing place ; and Faulkland, bidding Coryton follow, leaped over his prostrate foe, gained the door, with one bound was in the saddle, and the next instant out of sight.

Not so with Mr. Coryton ; it was very easy, as that gentleman was in the habit of observing, to say "Follow," but he was by no means in a condition to follow the course which that hint had so briefly suggested. Drunk as he was, he had thrown himself upon the man who received Faulkland's missile on his forehead ; but as the candlestick received more damage than the *os frontis* from the collision, the gallant Robert soon discovered that he had met with more than his match ; and, after a short but decisive struggle, was manacled, *secundum artem*, by his gallant and hard-headed antagonist. Passive non-resistance was thenceforth his only course, and he submitted

to be borne away, to answer for the high crime and misdemeanour of resisting an officer in the execution of his duty, and aiding and abetting the escape of a felon, without a single struggle.

The night which succeeded was a wretched one to Sherborne: the hint he had received of some mysterious evil threatening one who, lost as she was to him, was yet so dear, banished sleep from his couch. He made every effort to gain a few hours' rest, in order to sustain him through the exertions which the morrow might demand; but in vain. He rose much before his accustomed time, unrefreshed, and in a state of feverish excitement. He could do nothing, — think of nothing, — conceive nothing, by which the dull, heavy minutes might be quickened in their pace.

Eleven was the hour appointed for the interview; it was now but nine. He gazed at the clock, the very personification of Old Time, as it stood tick-ticking on in supreme unconcern at his impatience, and at the same unvarying rate. Many were the little manœuvres which he resorted to, to quicken its motions. He endeavoured first to watch the large hand in its pro-

gress round the dial ; but that proving miserably tedious, he paced up and down his apartment, bestowing a glance upon "the enemy" at every second turn. Next he seized the paper of the preceding evening, and by resolutely reading it through, from the No. 4096, at one end, to the "Printed and published," &c. at the other, got rid of some portion of the commodity that hung so heavily upon his hands. Lastly, he took his hat and sallied forth into the street. Here he examined with the greatest attention the contents of every book-stall and print-shop in his way, and watched every trifling occurrence that could by possibility awaken one spark of interest : thus having contrived at length to consume the entire intervening period, wrought up to the highest pitch of expectation, he entered Soho Square as the first clock of respectability in the neighbourhood announced that the wished-for hour of tryst was come.

A woman attired in a silk cloak, faded but of fashionable make, and in a bonnet much too gay both for the season and the time of day, hastily approached him. Her face, though partially con-

cealed by a thick veil, yet seemed by no means destitute of beauty. Her manner was agitated and anxious; and seizing Sherborne by the wrist, she exclaimed in a low husky voice,

“You are too late, sir! Merciful Heaven! we are both late,—too late to save or to warn. There is yet a chance,—one chance,—slender, and weak as a thread; but it must be tried.”

“Who and what are you?” exclaimed Frank, astonished no less by the matter of this address than by the manner in which it was uttered.

“I have been your equal,” replied the woman. “I am,—no matter what,—suffice it, that I am a friend to Francis Sherborne, and would save the innocent; but this is no time for parley,—blood may be flowing as we speak. Listen: Mrs. Broughton, her son and daughter-in-law reach England to-day; a desperate scheme is framed by a desperate man to attack them on their road to Lindsay Court, to get possession of—to slay the child!”

“To-day!” cried Frank in horror; “why, then, this mad delay?—why withhold your information till it has become useless?”

"I knew it not,—I knew it not till now," returned the other, passionately. "Their own fatal haste has caused it ; but the time will not admit of explanation. One who, deluded by that arch-fiend Faulkland, was to have been his accomplice, writes from his prison, that this is the day, and Black Robin's Corner, a lonely place some few miles on the other side of Canterbury, the spot."

"I know it well," said Frank.

"Then lose not a moment," pursued his companion. "Hasten thither as fast as horses' hoofs can bear you.—Life—life and death hang on your speed."

"Thanks ! Farewell !" exclaimed Sherborne, grasping the agitated creature by the hand ; "may Heaven reward you !"

She threw one brief glance above, as if encouraged by the prayer, then stood with clasped hands and straining eyes, watching the progress of Frank, who flew rather than ran in the direction of Mr. Hazeldine's chambers.

CHAPTER V.

Stop thief ! stop thief ! — a highwayman !
Not one of them was mute,
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

John Gilpin.

Hic cestus artemque repono.

VIRGIL.

THE PURSUIT. — THE MORE HASTE THE WORSE SPEED. — A
CRASH AND A SMASH. — “NO BONES BROKE THOUGH
SORE PEPPERED.” — THE ENCOUNTER. — THE BURST. — THE
CHASE — HARK-TO-HIM — TALLY-HO ! — A HARD RUN. —
WHOO-WHOOP !

PANTING and breathless, Sherborne with difficulty made his friend comprehend the dreadful urgency of the case.

“A chaise and four as quick as lightning,” exclaimed Hazeldine to his astounded Tiger, who,

totally unused to such energy on the part of his master, gave one grand stare, and dashed off to obey him.

“Near Canterbury, say you?” pursued George. “I have a brother quartered there with the —th dragoons; he may perhaps assist us.”

While Sherborne was recovering his breath, and detailing his story in a more connected form, his friend busied himself in selecting certain articles of apparel which he deemed absolutely necessary for his expedition. A dressing-case, three coats, a greater number of lower habiliments, about a dozen cravats, and boots in similar profusion, were carefully deposited in their several receptacles; so that a spectator might have imagined that Mr. Hazeldine contemplated a voyage to the East or West Indies, rather than a trifling journey of a few hours. Lastly, he produced the much-vaunted pistol-case, and sighing as he fixed the locks of his favourites, said,

“Ah! my dear Frank, you ought to have saved us all this trouble—so fair a chance so foully missed!”

"Hush!" interrupted Sherborne. "Yes, it is—I hear the clattering of wheels—it must be the chaise!"

In another instant the little beast of prey confirmed his suspicions, and hastily following with his master's and his own luggage—the latter consisting of a great-coat and a tooth-brush—he mounted the dickey, and the party set off at a Gretna-Green pace in the direction of Dover. The roads were wet and heavy, but the prospect of double fees made a very powerful impression upon the postboys, and through them acted immediately upon the mettle of the horses.

Rapidly as they were whirled along, it yet seemed but a snail's pace to the impatient Sherborne. He tossed uneasily in the carriage, and—despite the assurances of Mr. Hazeldine, that both boys and horses were doing all that terrestrial boys and horses could do—he was repeatedly urging them from the window to increase their speed. Again and again he bade them spur, till the foremost of these individuals began to entertain a suspicion that the gentlemen inside must

be the Secretary of State and his friend, in the greatest possible danger of being hanged, drawn, and quartered for high treason.

Tiger Jem, too, although with the most vague ideas as to the object in view, very handsomely joined in the excitement.

“Now then!”—he exclaimed from behind, as they were dashing along well together, and at the very extremity of their powers; “now then, lively gentlemen—put on the steam—and show the ladies how you can go!”

Thus taxed to their utmost, and covered with foam and mud, the panting animals reached Dartford, — a certain number of conventional cracks with the whip announced to the succeeding postboys, that their predecessors were satisfied with the bounty of the “swells” inside;—the effect was electric, fresh horses were ordered “to” in an instant, and the chaise whirled on to Gravesend.

Here Mr. James took an opportunity, while they were again changing, of expressing his unqualified approbation to the senior boy, of his and his partner’s diligence and exertion. “Upon

my life, my tulip," said he, "you ought to receive a testimonial of plate—something handsome, with an appropriate inscription—a silver toothpick, or such like."

The "tulip" wiped away the plentiful moisture that encumbered his beautiful head, and throwing his handkerchief in a ball to the bottom of his hat, replied, somewhat indirectly indeed, "that an extra half-sovereign made a deal of difference in trotting."

Sherborne's eagerness, however, soon put an end to the colloquy; off they started again through the narrow, dirty road, and with no less ardent riders than before.—Rochester was gained;—two hours and a half had not elapsed since they left the Albany, and half their journey was already accomplished.

"On, on!" cried Sherborne, hastily snatching a crust of bread at the request of Hazeldine; and on they went as fast as horse could lay leg to ground.

For eight miles they had nearly flown, when, tearing incautiously through a small heap of stones, the shock forced the near fore-wheel

from its hold. For a minute, the carriage held its way, then fell with a loud crash upon one of its sides.

Luckily the jaded creatures that drew it, required but little persuasion to pull up. The door was quickly forced open, and Frank and his companion made their escape unhurt. Sherborne gazed on the wreck with hands clasped in mute despair. George, meanwhile, was actively employed with the men in disengaging the horses from the shattered vehicle.

"Jem, you rascal! you have not had the impertinence to get damaged?" he asked, as that personage scrambled at length out of a thick blackthorn hedge, into which he had been hurled by the violence of the jerk.

Jem made no reply, but looked as if he had taken that liberty.

"Come," pursued his master, turning to Sherborne, and pointing to one of the postilion's horses that was now at liberty: "Arouse thee, then, my most un-merry man—mount! Sittingbourne is not three miles a-head, and there a

fresh chaise can be procured. Jem, you pup, follow with my portmanteau."

"Without a saddle, sir?" inquired Jem, with a plaintive touch to his hat.

"A saddle, sir!" exclaimed his master in amazement; "pray, what on earth do you pretend to want with a saddle, sir? — follow instantly."

Jem sighed, and muttered, as he mounted with great care, "If you had been a-sitting five minutes on a quickset hedge, you'd appreciate the accommodation of a saddle, sir, that's all."

At Sittingbourne, as Hazeldine had anticipated, to obtain a fresh chaise was but the work of a few minutes, and the party were once more upon the road.

The delay, however, had been a serious one; and the clock of the old cathedral tower was pealing seven, as, one mass of mud, they rattled through the narrow gateway that defends the loyal and enlightened city of Canterbury.

"To the left, — to the cavalry barracks," shouted George.

Captain Hazeldine, of his Majesty's —th regiment of dragoons, had just taken his seat at the mess-table,—the first spoonful of soup was in his hand,—the first bottle of Moselle (whether in a cut-glass decanter or not, history sayeth not) stood by his side,—when a card, bearing his brother's name and a demand for his instant presence, was delivered to him. — The Captain laid down his spoon, gave one glance at a fine turbot which Major Martinet was dispensing with the tact and delicacy of a veteran, and proceeded to obey the summons.

Briefly and pithily did George lay the case before him. “And now, most honoured brother of mine,” he concluded, “no reference to any wooden-headed Mayor,—put yourself at the head of some stout fellows, and, on with us, instantly, to the appointed spot!”

“Oh, dem the Mayor!” replied Captain Hazeldine, who was a shade more affected — a shade more good-tempered, and two or three shades sillier than his brother George. “Dem all civilians! — dem every thing that's civil! Three words to the commanding officer will settle

the affair, and we will start in a few minutes." Giving the requisite directions to an orderly, he left the room.

"That would be the pleasantest puppy in the world," said Hazeldine, after a pause, "were it not for one incurable fault."

"Ah, very probably,—and what may that be?" asked Frank, not knowing exactly what he said, but perceiving that it was expected he should say something.

"He is too old," replied his friend.

"Too old!" repeated Sherborne, as unconsciously as before.

"Too old," said George;—"just eighteen months too old; and that makes him the most disagreeable fellow in the world.—You may smile," he pursued,—“but if ever you come to have an elder brother of your own——but he is here, so let us make the best of him, such as he is."

"What is that you say?" said the Captain, whose ear had caught the few last words as he was entering. "Dem me if I understand your allusions."

"Not an uncommon symptom with elder brothers," returned George. "But what says the Colonel?"

"Men will be round in a moment," was the reply; and as he spoke the clattering of sabres was heard in the court-yard below. "Now, gentlemen, to horse!" pursued Captain Hazeldine;—"the moon is up, and we shall have a gallant ride!—George," he said, in a lower tone,— "take you the chestnut, she is hot, and your friend doesn't seem to have the steadiest hand in the world."

They were no sooner in the saddle than Sherborne, who was provided with a serious-looking old charger, struck deep his spurs and started off at a hard gallop.

"Hollo, sir! — Mr. Shipton — Sheppard — what's his confounded name?" shouted the Captain. "Hold hard, sir, for Heaven's sake? — George, call in your friend, or we shall be half ruined with bills for broken women and children."

Thus was poor Frank compelled once more to restrain his ardour, and to proceed at a sort of

purgatorial trot through the narrow streets of Canterbury. Once clear of the city they increased their speed, and the exhilarating motion, joined with the fresh evening breeze, and, above all, the heart-stirring object in view, raised Sherborne to such a pitch of excitement that it needed all Hazeldine's authority to induce him to conform his pace to that of their better-judging leader.

The full moon was already shining high in heaven, and shed a varied light as thin fleecy clouds drove swiftly across her disk, — now glancing on the scabbards and helmets of the troopers, — now scarcely penetrating the leafy branches that closed above their heads: lightly and gaily did it play upon the stream, as they cantered through the little village of Bridge, and beamed with a soft and sober radiance, as if in reverence, upon its grey church-spire.

Pressing up the long steep hill before them, they halted for a few moments to breathe their horses on gaining its brow. The barren and extensive tract of land, known as Barham Downs, lay stretched in front, with its white chalky road glistening in the moonlight. About a couple of

miles in advance, and on the right-hand of the road, was the turning that led to "Black Robin's Corner," — a dreary spot situate at the meeting of four cross roads, one of which bore away direct through the woods to Lindsay Court, the old family seat of the Broughtons.

"Forward!" cried the Captain. "Ten minutes' gallop and the danger's past."

More than half the distance was surmounted, when George, checking his steed, exclaimed,

"Do my eyes play false, or is that a carriage coming down the hill before us?" The party paused,—a vehicle was distinctly visible, descending at a rapid rate the rising ground, about a mile ahead; it was soon lost beneath an intervening ridge, and every eye was strained to catch its reappearance.—It came not.

"Gracious Heavens!" exclaimed Frank,—
"they have turned the fatal corner, and are lost!—Follow—follow! for the love of Heaven!"

So saying, and urging his horse to its utmost speed, he struck off by what appeared to be the paling of some enclosed ground; leading the way

rapidly across the common, by a rough and scarcely distinguishable tract,—he gained, at length, a road of broader dimensions and more defined character.

Screams and cries for assistance were now clearly heard, and at no great distance.

“On, on!” shouted Frank, burying his rowels in the sides of the sluggish beast, and the whole party dashed forward at full gallop. The clamour increased,—shrieks, prayers, and imprecations, in one confused din, were borne to the ear.

“To the right,” cried Sherborne; and Captain Hazeldine, who had taken the lead, turned abruptly the corner in question.

Within a hundred yards stood a carriage; the horses kicking and rearing, and their riders alashing right and left with heavy whips, and madly endeavouring to force a way through a party of ruffians that surrounded them;—the door of the vehicle was thrown open; and a man, well mounted, appeared struggling desperately to tear something from the grasp of those within.

“Rescue! Rescue!” shouted the Captain in a voice that sounded clear amid the uproar. But, unable to check his steed in time, he was carried

onwards some yards beyond the scene of action. Sherborne followed, rushing furiously towards the horseman with intent to seize him. The latter, however, quitting his hold, raised himself in the stirrup, and, with one tremendous blow, felled him to the ground ; then discharging a pistol into the carriage, backed his horse, and, with the rapidity of lightning, cleared a four-feet gate into an adjoining inclosure.

Young Hazeldine fired, but without apparent effect, as he took the leap.

“ Missed, by the Pope ! ” exclaimed the former ; “ then to him, boys, Tally ho ! Tally ho ! ” and with an echoing view-halloo he went steadily at the gate. The mare, however, with a sudden plunge, bounded on one side,— a proceeding which, with a less skilful rider, had effected so much of the desired object as to have lodged him, at all events, snugly on the other side.

“ Confusion seize ye ! ” muttered George, bringing her up a second time, and giving her her head, “ go your own blessed pace ; ” and, with a furious rush, she topped by a foot the highest bar, just in time to afford her rider a glimpse of

Faulkland,—for he it was,—as he took a thick quick-set hedge at the farther extremity of the same field.

The Major, mounted on a powerful Grey, evidently a well-trained hunter, bore straight across the country.

Hazeldine, on the Chestnut, followed ; hedges and ditches were passed in rapid succession, the Grey going gradually ahead ; the steadiness with which he went at his leaps giving him considerable advantage over the hot-headed, unmanageable beast that carried George.

The moon now shone in an unclouded sky, lighting up the large inclosures and the wooded hills beyond with the brilliancy of day. On, on, in headlong course, flew pursuer and pursued ; the elastic turf rose beneath their feet ; and the mare was rapidly gaining ground.

A massive ox-fence, consisting of a double post and rail, was now seen stretching across their way. “In and out,” without an instant’s hesitation, went the careful Grey.—Not so the other ;—of the true Leicestershire breed,—she cleared the whole with a single spring.—Landing,

however, in a turnip-field, soaked with the preceding rain, Hazeldine found it was madness to push on :—far too fine for such a country, the slim legs of the mare sunk in the heavy soil above the hocks at every spring ; and holding her together as best he might, her rider was compelled to witness the distance between him and the chase fast increasing, as the latter ploughed across the ground at a scarcely diminished pace.

The Major's object now began to develope itself.—Passing to the left of a little village,—nestled, as it were, affectionately around its humble church,—he was evidently making for those extensive woods that, as we have seen, crowned the hills beyond. Once within the leafy screen of “the Covert,” such were the darkness and intricacy of the roads, or rather, horse tracks, that traverse that extensive tract of woodland in all directions, that further pursuit would be vain. They lay but a short mile in advance. A hedge, however, of the description known among sportsmen as a “bullfinch,”—that is, one consisting of thick underwood intermixed with young trees,—

appeared to bar all further progress ; — no friendly gap, — no gate was to be seen.

Holding hard, till he had arrived within the deep shade thrown by the lofty branches, Faulkland for the first time struck spurs into his horse, and charged desperately through. — Hazeldine followed on successfully ; and now being once again on the light grass-land, he urged the Chestnut to the very top of her speed. Now, indeed, her superior blood began to tell ; — forward she flew like the wind.

With heel and hand did the Major press the gallant Grey to the utmost, but in vain. The clods cut by his hoofs were even beating against the head and chest of his pursuer. — Scarce twenty yards separated them.

A rugged bank, some ten feet high, protected by a rail, and covered with rough bushes and brambles, interspersed here and there with a straggling pollard, lay on the left.

It was a fearful chance, — but the race was for life or death ; and Faulkland, now finding escape by other means impossible, seized the advantage

of a curve which took from the abruptness of his turn, and went gallantly at it.

The cool and steady veteran made good his footing on the side,—with a couple of bounds, he gained the top, and disappeared in an instant.

“The Devil!” cried Hazeldine in astonishment, “then here goes; and ten to one on a broken neck!”

So saying, with both hands at the rein,—every muscle in body and limb strung to their tightest, but with scarcely a hope of success,—he made an attempt to follow.

The fiery mare threw up her head, and tore madly forward. In an instant George found himself flying through the air like an arrow. One desperate plunge forwards, and horse and man together were rolling down the opposite side.—A bullet whistled past his ear as he fell.

Faulkland, judging that if his foe succeeded in reaching the summit he must remain for some moments stationary, had pulled up, determined to try the last. The impetuosity of his pursuer's horse, in all probability, preserved his life.

Torn and bruised as he was, yet game to the

back-bone, Hazeldine never quitted his hold of the bridle rein ; and the mare quickly regaining her feet, he threw himself once more into the saddle, and the chase commenced anew.

—The Major now, flogging severely, and aiding by every motion the exertions of his steed, made desperate play for the woods almost at hand. The rapid Stour, swollen by the late rains, alone separated him from the meadows that immediately skirted them : into the midst of this he plunged ; and, though borne down some little distance by the force of the current, his panting steed yet gained in safety the opposite bank.

The mare, now close at his heels, as if collecting all her energies for one last tremendous effort, sprang like a rocket fairly across the stream,—a level distance of nearly thirty feet. The goal was all but won,—a single hedge intervened. Faulkland, with a loud crash, broke down the obstacle ; and the Chestnut, spent with her last exertion, and thoroughly jaded, came tottering through the gap some three or four lengths behind him.

But the race was done !—Faulkland, driven

from his intended track by the closeness of the pursuit, had entered a *cul de sac*—in front, and on the left, the enclosure was bounded by a flooded osier-bed, through which the stream they had just passed made its way by twenty different channels—on the right extended a steep and chalky precipice, crowned with thick overhanging firs, that threw their black and fantastic branches in strong relief against the clear moonlit sky,—further progress was impossible, and Hazeldine commanded the sole avenue of retreat.

“Stop!” exclaimed the latter, levelling a pistol, “or I fire.” The Major turned slowly round—paused for an instant to gather up his reins, then grasping firmly his heavy whip, buried his spurs once more in his charger’s sides and dashed full speed at his opponent.

“Your blood be on your own head!” cried Hazeldine as he pulled,—the Grey swerved at the report, and passed harmlessly by, his rider erect and steady in the seat as ever;—the faithful animal, however, missed his sustaining hand—he quickly relapsed into a canter, and Faulkland,

— without a word, — fell stone dead upon the turf, — the bullet had pierced his heart !

“ By Heaven ! ” said George, drawing a long breath, — “ I thought he bore a charmed life, — but he is sped,” he added, dismounting, and gazing on the dead man’s face. “ An instant ago that body was all health and vigour, all schemes and hopes ; and now — strange that a half-ounce of lead should hold the power of hurrying a living spirit thus instantaneously into the presence of its Maker ! — But I must sound signals of distress.” So saying, he re-charged his weapon ; and, firing three or four shots in succession, waited patiently the arrival of his friends.

Shouts were soon heard, mingled with the rattling of arms and the tramp of horses.

“ Have you secured the murderer ? ” cried the Captain, galloping up at the head of such of his troop as had been enabled to make their way across the country.

“ Murderer ! ” repeated George, turning pale at the expression, “ Just Providence ! poor Frank is killed then ? ”

“Your friend is safe,” interrupted his brother hastily; “stunned he was, though not seriously hurt:—but the child lies a corpse in his mother’s arms.”

“Now Heaven be with him, sith it may no better be!” exclaimed Hazeldine, unconsciously quoting the well-known ballad, and evidently much relieved by the explanation. “Vengeance has followed swift indeed: slayer and slain have met ere this above!”—and he pointed to the stiffening body of the Major.

“What!” said the Captain, “run into,—and so near cover too!—dear me!—dem it!”

“Ay,” returned George, placing his foot in the stirrup: “put up your sword;—’twas

A LONG MATCH, WELL PLAYED, AND CLEARLY WON.”

L'ENVOY.

IF so strong an affection do we possess for what is or was our own, that philosophers have maintained the disembodied spirit hangs with a lingering fondness round the dust it once animated, some licence may surely be permitted to those who are loth to take leave abruptly of creations to which they have, as it were, lent a momentary life and being. Under cover then of this excuse, we shall not dismiss the characters of our tale without a brief notice of their subsequent fortunes.

Of Mr. Thugg, the Ex-Director, we are concerned to say, the news is anything but favourable. Engaging deeply in the mysteries of stock-jobbing, he at length became the victim of cleverer speculators—we had almost said greater knaves—than

.

himself; and discovered, when too late, that he had put forth his arm somewhat further than he could conveniently draw it back.

A small annuity alone was saved from the wreck of his property, which, although amply sufficient for his customary personal expenses, would no longer enable him to hold his place among the bulls and bears on 'Change: in short, he "waddled;" and thus, because he could no longer sell to others what he did not possess himself, and what they never dreamt of receiving, he died of a broken heart, fancying himself poor, as, by a similar effort of imagination, he had lived fifty years in the world, believing himself to be rich.

His friends, Miss Magge and the Colonel, are both alive and well: the latter indeed declares that he never intends to die; and, although plagued occasionally by attacks of his old enemy the gout, has recourse to no medicine save his favourite glass of whisky and water with a slice of lemon in it,—a mixture he avers to contain the elements of all physic.

As for Mr. Robert Coryton, him whom we left

"in trouble," the good offices of Sherborne,—interposed from gratitude to Marian, whose affections, notwithstanding the errors of both, were Coryton's in life and death,—succeeded in extricating him from his difficulties after some slight inconvenience, and he ultimately obtained; on that gentleman's farther application, a situation in the police.

Nor has Frank ever had reason to repent his recommendation—a steadier and more daring officer does not exist, as he testified in conducting a recent desperate attack upon a gaming-house—where by the way he had the satisfaction of greeting his old acquaintance Mr. Isaaks, and of conducting him in turn to the "lock-up." He has lately, we presume from some slight informality in their previous nuptials, been re-united in the bonds of matrimony to the lady whose timely counsels rescued him from destruction.

Mrs. Broughton, the young widow, survived not long the loss of her darling boy. Every earthly affection of hers had been settled on that one object,—they had never known another; the terror and alarm which she underwent during that

evening of horror, and the melancholy catastrophe with which it concluded, operated upon nerves never strong with a withering effect, and her meek and gentle spirit looked anxiously forward for the hour when she should rejoin her lost one in another world.

The spot where the murder was committed may still be easily discovered. A hedge-alehouse has been erected in the immediate vicinity where the four cross roads meet; bearing as its sign a gentleman with a coffee-coloured complexion, and a cast of features anything but prepossessing; he holds a capacious jug in one hand, and a pistol in the other, thereby testifying, it would seem, the owner's having been in his lifetime addicted to beer and bloodshed. That this is a portrait of "Black Robin" himself,—whoever that worthy may have been,—we are led to infer from the following couplet inscribed below the figure, and remarkable for the extreme caution with which it admits human testimony:—

"If people tell you true—'tis clear
This is Black Robin's Corner here."

Hazeldine—the gay, the fickle, the exquisite

George Hazeldine — has become a sober married man ; he has locked up his pistols,—solemnly renounced *rouge et noir*, and entertains his first-born daily after dinner by showing him pictures, and telling him ghost stories.

But there are two old friends who yet remain to be disposed of, Frank and Clara.—The latter, put at length in quiet possession of the Broughton family estates, where did she bestow them ? —and whom, after so many chances, did she select as her partner for life ?—And the orphan child of the beloved, the hapless Julia ?— Who nourished — who educated — who adopted it as their own ?—

If any matter-of-fact young lady or gentleman require to be enlightened on these points, or can entertain any reasonable doubt upon the subject, all we can say is, as the classic Coryton himself might have said, with reference to such frigidity of imagination,

“ Non equidem invideo,—mirror magis ! ”

THE END.

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